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# **Creolisation and Identity in a Neo-colonial Setting: The Case of Réunion**

*By*

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**Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfilment of Requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology**

**The University of Warwick**

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2004

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Very  
Tightly  
Bound

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## **Creolisation and Identity in a Neo-colonial Setting: The Case of Réunion**

### **Abstract**

This thesis is a study of the interaction of creolisation and domination with the process of cultural identity formation in Réunion. Réunionese identity remained remarkably stable throughout the era of French rule and laws rather than developing through a succession of alterations from the beginning of settlement. Today, the main difficulty for Réunionese is how to construct a viable identity in the public sphere. The main focus of the study is on the social formation of a cultural and ethnic identity.

'Métissage' is confined in this thesis to ethnic and biological crossover while the term 'syncretism' is confined to religious crossover. By contrast, creolisation describes a wider social process (including culture and language). Creolisation is seen throughout history and is of a different order to métissage and syncretism, it covers the totality of identity formation as it develops through socio-cultural, economic and political change. Identity is supported by the notion of métissage whereby discrimination is minimised through policies that promote the formation of a peaceful inter-ethnic society. In this context, the culture of the black population, which is the essence of Réunionese identity and by extension of Creole culture and language, becomes devalued. After an opening debate that sets the social and historical contexts in which the conceptual framework of the thesis is mapped out, I use a range of case studies of key texts to demonstrate the domination of France through its agents, and the recent resistance to this domination

by the local people. Cultural activists now aim to construct in the public sphere the Creole culture and identity formed in the private sphere. The Creole language is the key cultural element in resisting this French domination.

The question of identity formation is becoming a concrete reality, with multiple differentiations being played out among the Réunionese through one or more social processes. The research is based on original fieldwork conducted in Réunion and focuses on the analysis of questionnaires that were designed to ascertain public opinion. In addition, direct observations were made through attendance over the period of a year at workshops organised by cultural movement activists.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank Professor Robin Cohen and Professor Neil Lazarus for their supervision; their critiques and comments provided me with a great opportunity to revise my perspective and I benefited greatly from their suggestions. Second, for their unflagging support, wise counsel and incisive reading of my draft chapters. Special thanks to Selina Cohen and Sheley Delbridge for her help with the editing of my papers.

I am grateful to Bernard Chérubini of the University of Réunion who agreed to be my local correspondent and also to the University of Réunion and the Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherche sur la Construction de l'Identité (CIRCI) for offering me the right to use their infrastructure during my fieldwork.

I am also grateful to my research colleagues, and particularly to Lucette Labache and Françoise Verges who have provided useful criticism and suggestions on my work. Thanks also to Jean-Paul Melade, Séga Tolsy, Guito Letoullec, the Charles-Dominique family, Jean-Phillipe Payet, Lyne Bigot, Suzanne Chazan, Mike McLeod, Edgard Hassan and all other scholars and friends in Réunion and throughout the world. Thanks to all the people who agreed to be interviewed and volunteered to complete the questionnaires. Thanks also to the cultural associations and their representative members. I am sure that I have forgotten to refer to some people and I apologise to any I may have omitted.

Last, but not least, I am very grateful to my Kafrine who has helped me considerably during very difficult times since the beginning of my thesis and followed me around the world to continue work on the thesis.

I dedicate the thesis to my parents Alain and Rolande Médéa, and my brothers Sébastien and Nicolas. Special thanks also to all my extended family in Réunion.

This thesis was funded with the help of the **Conseil Régional de La Réunion** and the **Fond Social Européen** without which I would not have been able to undertake the thesis. Thanks also to the Conseil Général for the sponsorship of my tuition fees for the year 2000-2001.



## ACRONYMS

ANT	Agence Nationale du Travail
BA	Bachelor of Art
BUMIDOM	Bureau pour la Migration des Départements Outre Mer
CASE	Centre d'Animation Socio-Educatif
CNARM	Comité National d'Accueil et d'Actions pour les Réunionnais en Mobilité
DOM	Département Outre Mer
INSEE	Institut National de la Statistique et d'Etudes Economiques
IUFM	Institut Universitaire des Formations des Maîtres
LEA	Local Education Authority
LTS	Logement Très Social
MJC	Maison des Jeunes et de la Culture
PCR	Parti Communiste Réunionnais
PS	Parti Socialiste
RPR	Rassemblement pour La République
RUP	Région Ultra-Périphérique of European Union
SRECEC	Société Réunionnaise Contre l'Enseignement du Créole
SHLMR	Société d'Habitation à Loyer Modéré de La Réunion
SIDR	Société Immobilière du Département de La Réunion
UMP	Union pour la Majorité Présidentielle, or later, Union pour le Mouvement Populaire
UDR	Union Départementaliste de La Réunion
UDF	Union pour la Démocratie Française
TOM	Territoire Outre Mer
ZUP	Zone d'Urbanisation Prioritaire

## GLOSSARY

**Département:** A Département is a major administrative division within France. There are ninety-six Départements in the mainland (Métropole) and four overseas Départements: Guadeloupe, Guyane, Martinique and Réunion. These four Départements are also known as DOM: Départements Outre-Mer or overseas Départements. Governmental structure takes the form of a Préfecture with County Councils for each Région.

**Départementalisation:** Départementalisation is the process of becoming a Département. Previously, Réunion had the status of a colony. On 21 March 1946 it became a French Département together with Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guyana (DOM). This status differs from that of the Territories (Mayotte, Nouvelle Calédonie, Tahiti, St-Pierre et Miquelon and Polynésie Française). These islands are also called TOM: Territoires Outre Mer (or overseas Territories). Areas with territory status do not have Préfecture, a Regional Council or County Council but are administrated by a governor.

**Kabar:** Kabar is gathering held during the evening where one can dance and sing to Creole music originating in Africa and Madagascar.

**La Fet Kaf:** A festival which takes place on 20 December annually, marking the abolition of slavery in Réunion which took place on this date in 1848. When François Mitterrand became President of the Republic, he proclaimed this date a bank holiday in

Réunion. It was initially a festival restricted to the descendants of the slaves but is now a general celebration of freedom, known as the Festival of Liberty.

**Maloya:** Originally the music of the slaves, Maloya is a mix of Malagasy, African and Indian rhythms. This music was forbidden during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in all public places, as well as in the media until 1981. Maloya is one of the faces of an old form of primitive Sêga.

**Marronnage** (also known as Marooning): This term refers to the escape of the slaves in search of freedom from the plantations and slave masters.

**Métissage:** The French word 'métissage' refers to a mixture of ethnic groups. Nowadays one can use this term for ethnic crossovers in general but I retain the original meaning in this thesis. Similar terms exist in other European languages such as '*mestizaje*' in Spanish or '*mestiço*' in Portuguese.

**Métis:** In this thesis 'métis' denotes a person or individual coming from a métissage background.

**Réunionnais:** The inhabitants of Réunion are known as Réunionnais.

**Réunionese:** Réunionese is the adjective denoting 'coming from Réunion'. For example, one can refer to Réunionese society, Réunionese identity and so forth.

**Préfecture:** The Préfecture has the general responsibility of exercising the power of the French State. The Préfecture controls the defence of the laws, the interests of the

French nation, the maintenance of public order and the safeguarding of people and goods. A Préfecture is lead by a Préfet who is the chief commissioner of the French State. There is a Préfecture in each Département of France controlling State administration such as Social Security, Local Education Administration, Health administration and National Police as well as the issue of official documents such as Visas, Passports, ID cards and driving licences.

**Région:** A région regroups several Départements. There are twenty Régions in Metropolitan France and two overseas: Martinique, Guadeloupe and Guyana form one region while Réunion is simultaneously a Région and a Département, the only one of its kind in all France. Governmental structure takes the form of a Préfecture with a Regional and County Council.

**Séga:** Séga used to be the term for what is now called Maloya. The colonists wanted to change this slave music and dance by adding some European rhythms to form a Creole dance. The result is a mix of Séga rhythm with folk varieties from Europe – a 'bourgeois' dance. According to the defenders of authentic Maloya, Séga is associated with white colonial domination, its practice was sometimes seen as a reaffirmation of a neo-colonialist spirit in the 1950s.

#### **A note on usage**

The terms above are a mixture of French, Creole and English expressions. In order to simplify the text I have decided, in consultation with my supervisors, to use Roman script (not italics) in all cases.

## ETHNIC GROUP GLOSSARY

### **Chinois (Chinese):**

Buddhist and Christian, the Chinois are descendants of the first Chinese indentured labourers (mainly from Canton and Macao) who arrived in Réunion from a few years after the abolition of slavery in 1848 until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Creole and/or Métis:**

People of mixed-descent: Kaf, Malbar, Petit Blanc and some Chinois and, since the 1970s, also Zorey. They are Christian and come from various class backgrounds but are generally from the working and middle classes of Réunion. The terms Creole and Métis do not denote an ethnic group as such, but a social group without a strong ethnic component.

### **Kaf:**

Descendants of the African and Malagasy slaves who arrived in Réunion at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Kaf are Christian and have Afro-Malgache or Negroid phenotypes, a result of the first métissage on the island. The term Kaf originates from the Arabic *kaffir*, denoting 'one who is not Muslim, who is not faithful to the religion of Islam'.

### **Karane:**

The Karane are Shiite Muslims from North-West India (Gujurat) who migrated to Madagascar. The Karane left Madagascar and came to Réunion from the mid 1980s, following incidents of ethnic violence directed against them.

**Komor (Comorians):**

Black Muslim emigrants mainly from the independent Comoros archipelagos as well as from Mayotte Island (A French Territory in the Indian Ocean). They arrived in Réunion from the end of the 1970s and are still in the process of migrating. In Creole, 'Komor' encompasses the Mahorais from Mayotte and Comorians from the Comoros islands.

**Gros Blanc:**

Christians, also descendants of the first white French colonists who arrived in Réunion three centuries ago at the same time as the Petit Blanc and the Kaf.

**Malbar and/or Tamoul (Tamils):**

The Malbar came from the Malabar region of India, mainly as indentured labourers. The majority arrived in Réunion after the abolition of slavery in 1848. Most of the Malbar are Christians. Ethnically Tamoul and Malbar have the same background but the group became divided in the early 1980s with the desire by the Tamoul to return to their original religious values and abandon their dual religiosity in favour of Hinduism.

**Malgache (Malagasies):**

Malgache are emigrants from Madagascar and, like the Komor, are adversely affected by racism.

**Petit Blanc and/or Yab:**

The Petit Blanc or Yab are Christian, descendants of the first white French immigrants who arrived in Réunion three centuries ago, at the same time as the Kaf. The Petit Blanc

have a farming background although many moved down to the urban areas after Départementalisation in search of employment. Those who still live in the highlands are among the poorest inhabitants of Réunion and are usually called *Petit Blanc des hauts*.

**Zarab:**

Muslims from Gujrat, North-West India, who arrived in Réunion at the same time as the Chinois at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Zorey:**

Christian and white Metropolitan French. They are mostly civil servants but are also represented among *gendarmes*, police officers, the military, medical doctors and especially magistrates sent from mainland France since Départementalisation.

**A note on usage**

The terms above are a mixture of French, Creole and English expressions. In order to simplify the text I have decided, in consultation with my supervisors, to use Roman script (not italics) in all cases.

## CHAPTER I

### 1.1 Introduction: The history of Réunion

Situated in the Southwest of the Indian Ocean, the island of Réunion covers a surface area of 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> and is mountainous, with *Piton des Neiges* reaching its highest point at 3,070 m. Réunion is situated 180km west of Mauritius, 800km east of Madagascar, 2,500km from the African coast and 10,000km from its capital, Paris. The island was uninhabited until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There was, therefore, no indigenous population prior to colonisation. This is a fundamental dimension of the problematic of identity. Even today, this absence of any autochthonous past generates the quest for identity within Réunionese society. The island was populated by successive waves of immigrants; the current society of Réunion has therefore been created *ex nihilo*, by French colonial rules. Today, the actual population of Réunion is about 750,000 inhabitants. Réunion has a plural and complex society, constituted like a mosaic, artificially, under the impulse of European market capitalism, from populations imported or deported from several parts of the world: Africa, Asia, Europe, India and Madagascar. Réunion has passed from the status of a colony to a French Département. Its inhabitants changed in successive stages from slave and indentured status, to colonial subjects, finally becoming French citizens. In many cases population retained the cultural specificities of each ethnic component.

The period of plantation slavery gave birth to unequal social relations between populations of diverse origins, as well as cultural exchanges and fusions. The abolition of slavery led to the importation of other population groups from several continents. Réunionese identity is not deep-rooted in an autochthonous cultural identity which



existed prior to plantation slavery and colonisation. The plantation economy played a determinant role in cultural contact between different groups. Beyond the idealistic vision of plurality and métissage of Réunionese society, I notice that there is still an asymmetrical relationship between the dominant and the dominated, between the metropolitan centre and the colonial periphery. I will give further examples in the thesis which generate a complex of identity. Réunion has shared historical experiences not only with its neighbouring islands of Mauritius, Rodriguez, the Seychelles, the Chagos and Diego Garcia islands, but also with more distant islands in the Caribbean, Cape Verde and with Brazil, all of which were colonised and 'developed' along similar lines. In these geographical areas, the métissage that emerged from these multicultural societies precluded the dominance of any particular culture or civilisation, yet retained certain cultural specificities of each ethnic component.

The notion of identity needs some explanation. The term 'identity' became fashionable in the 1960s and was associated with certain social movements in Europe and the USA. Scholarly discourse has also followed the phenomenon of identity politics. In Réunion, the various components of identity (political, economic, sociological or affective) have made the formation of the concept more difficult. More recently, Réunionese identity has evoked considerable interest in academic discourse. Before 1982, when the University of Réunion was founded, the condition of Réunionese individuals as subjects was poorly understood. In the last twenty years, books and articles concerned with identity have been written by Carpanin Marimoutou (1988, 1992, 2002) and Jean-Francois Sam-Long (1989, 1990) in literary studies; Sudel Fuma (1992, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2001) in History; Bernard Chérubini (1996, 1999) in

Anthropology; Ho Hai Quang (1998, 2001) in Economics and Vergès (1999, 2001) in History-Politics.

New researchers have started to work in the area of socio-psychology and additional research in History and Politics has arisen over the last few years. Lucette Labache (Social Anthropology) and Françoise Vergès (Politics) are frequently cited scholars. Labache concentrated on race and ethnic relations in Réunion while Vergès pioneered the study of post-colonialism taking the island as a case study. These debates on identity are not yet a matter of intellectual controversy due to the very small research communities in Réunion and the absence of a Social Sciences department at the University of Réunion at present. In the future, other scholars in Réunion may pay more attention to the vital problem regarding the nature of Réunionese identity and the way in which it works at a social, ethnic, political and cultural level.

One of the objectives of the thesis is to fill the gap in analysing the cultural and social identity of the Réunionnais. Societal formation within the Creole world is closely linked to colonisation and slavery. This shared history has laid the foundation for 'the contemporary social structure of these communities and for the patterns of social stratification'<sup>1</sup> that can be seen in Réunionese society today.

In the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the plantation ceases to be the model. With the mechanising of labour, the factory-planter no longer has control of political and social life. Plantation society dies and a new society forms based on two new characteristics of the Creole identity model: heteroculture and ethnicity.<sup>2</sup> With the term heteroculture, Fuma and Poirrier describe the situation of the Réunionese population as

<sup>1</sup> Winford, D. (1999) 'Sociolinguistic Approaches to Language Use in the Anglophone Caribbean' in Morgan, E. (ed.) *Language and the Social Construction of Identity in Creole situations* Los Angeles: UCLA, CAAS publications. p. 43

<sup>2</sup> Poirier, P. (1990) 'Heteroculture', *Encyclopédie Philologique*, T.2, Paris, PUF, 1990.

different from that of ethnic superimposition, simple biculturalism, cultural intersections or any other colonial situation.<sup>3</sup> Réunion shows completely new characteristics. Réunion is an original pluri-ethnic ensemble in which the reciprocal influences of the two cultural models build a network of relationships which is very complex. In Réunion those who have a strong identity are those who can make a link with their original continent/country and are able to demonstrate it in the public sphere. At the same time, by affirming their original culture and religion these people 'lose' their métis identity: the métis subject cannot recognise its original identity or culture. The subject does not have a set identity. The subject then defines himself or herself as holding a Creole identity. Today in general Creole means to be Réunionnais and to be different to the Zorey. This situation evokes the notions of purity (rootedness) and impurity (uprootedness) or construction (formation) and de-construction (de-formation) in relation to identity.

The pro-slavery plantation economy which was developed as a colonial, capitalist phenomenon played a determining role in connecting civilisation with the formation of identity. Today, the heritage of slavery is present in the cultural landscape and Creole mentalities. On 16 March 1946 when Réunion underwent Départementalisation, strong socio-economic development began on the island, especially through infrastructure imposed by the French assimilationist system. From an under-developed colonial environment, Réunion suddenly shifted to an 'over-developed' system, as compared with other countries of its geographical zone. This made regional exchanges difficult and unilateral. Like the other DOMs, Réunion plays important economic and military roles in its regional ocean zone.

<sup>3</sup> See, Fuma, S. et J. Poirier, (1992) *Métissage, bétéroculture et identité culturelle, le défi Réunionnais*, in Marinoutou, J.-C. *Métissage. Littérature Histoire*. T.1. Université de La Réunion. Paris: L'Harmattan.

It is difficult to define a Réunionnais with any degree of sociological precision. The Réunionese identity born in this context is plural, complex and influenced by this phenomenon. Produced by history, creolisation is of a different order to métissage, which is played out through political and economic differentiation and embedded in the collective unconscious. The abolition of slavery was followed by the importation of populations from several continents. Such population movements have over time helped construct what one now refers to as a 'global' society. Réunionese creolisation was not static but a process of transformation that continued through slavery, colonialism and, now, Départementalisation. Being anchored as it is in the collective unconscious, it presents the image of a society defined by the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of different religious and ethnic groups. However, even if no major conflicts are visible between the communities for the time being, the 'harmonious plural' society is, as Lucette Labache points out, 'more a myth than a reality'.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 Ethnic groups in Réunion

In French social sciences the conceptualisation and study of ethnicity and race is difficult, especially when describing ethnicity studies in intercultural relations as in the case of Réunion. This is because the Republican tradition deemphasises ethnic awareness and identity. For the purposes of data collection, dividing the population into different ethnic groups is sometimes explicitly prohibited by law. So how does one define ethnicity and race in Réunion? In general, the notions of ethnicity and race are

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<sup>4</sup> Labache, L. (1997). *L'Ethnicité à La Réunion: Vers un Métissage post?* Thèse de Doctorat. Paris: EHESS, p. 22

distinct. As Nakayama and Martin <sup>5</sup> note, ethnicity is often based on membership that relates to historical origins, languages and customs. Ethnic identity is socially constructed and there are rational and non-rational elements involved such as tradition, heritage, cultural elements (including language and symbolic markers). It can also involve place of origin and biological relation.<sup>6</sup> Race, however, is based solely on the biological and physiological conceptions.<sup>7</sup> According to Nakayama and Martin, race involves shared phenotypical traits derived from common ancestry as well as shared religion. According to Thomas Eriksen, ethnicity is an

'aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum interaction [...] When cultural differences regularly make a difference in interaction between members of groups, the social relationship has an ethnic element. Ethnicity refers both to aspects of gain and loss in interaction and to aspects of meaning in the creation of identity' <sup>8</sup> [Ethnic groups] have an ideology of shared ancestry in that they have a shared religion [they] tend to have notions of common ancestry justifying their unity'.<sup>9</sup>

Since the beginning of the 1990s, studies on ethnic identity have shown that it is often redefined by the groups and individuals in question. The creation of identity occurs through socialization and the creativity of human beings as they reconstruct their own identity and context. To define ethnic groups in Réunion, I will use both racial and ethnic categories within the historical, social and political context.<sup>10</sup> I also include religious indicators, cultural retentions from the past and subjective self-identification. All these constitute important factors in the definition of the ethnic identity.

<sup>5</sup> Nakayama, T. and J. Martin (2000). 'Current and future directions in ethnicity and methodology', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 24, 525-539, p. 526.

<sup>6</sup> See Alba, R. (1985). *Ethnicity and Race in the U.S.A.* London: Routledge. And (1990) *Ethnic Identity: The Transformation of White America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Nakayama and Martin, 2000: 526.

<sup>8</sup> Eriksen, T. (2002). *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press (Second edition). Pp 11-13.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> See Nakayama, T. and J. Martin (2000).

The population in Réunion at large is structured around the common experience of plantation economies (growing coffee and sugar cane). On the one hand, the population of Réunion is composed of descendants of slaves and indentured labourers from Africa, the Comoros archipelago, India, Madagascar and Asia. On the other hand, it is formed by plantation owners and ex-slave masters, as well as civil servants in the French administration coming from Europe. Categorisation into specific ethnic groups forms part of the sub-cultures in Réunionese society: terms for these groups are commonly used in everyday Réunionese speech.

After defining the different ethnic groups, I will proceed to delineate the social structure of Réunion by community or ethnic group. As mentioned above, in Réunion there is no Census data for specific ethnic groups: it is officially forbidden. Ethnic identification is also prohibited in official statistics in the French Republic. The terminology used to define the different ethnic groups in Réunion therefore has no official approval. I did not obtain my data from INSEE (the official bureau of statistics). It is of course difficult to determine exact official numbers of ethnic groups in Réunion. I refer to my own research.

The table below is a major finding from my three years of research. It was compiled with the help of employees working within administrations such as INSEE and the Department of Social Security. However, due to the illegal nature of the work, they chose to remain unidentified.

Table 1.1: Ethnic origins of population in Réunion (estimation in December 2003)

Ethnic Origin	Estimated Percentage (2003)	Estimated Number (2003)
Kaf (1)	23.0	172,500
Métis (2)	21.0	157,500
Malbar and/or Tamoul	18.0	135,000
Petit Blanc and/or Yab	14.5	108,750
Zorey	10.6	79,500
Chinois	4.5	33,750
Zarab	4.3	32,250
Komor (Mahorais & Comorians)	2.4	18,000
Gros Blanc	1.0	7,500
Malgache	0.3	2,250
Karane	0.2	1,500
Others (3)	0.2	1,500
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>750,000</b>
Diaspora in France	96.0	192,000
Diaspora in Europe (not France)	2.9	5,700
Diaspora in the rest of the world	1.1	2,300
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>200,000</b>

1: The Kaf group is composed of people of black descent from Africa and Madagascar and also the Métis of the two groups, i.e. Africans and Malgache (Afro-Malgache).

2: The group Métis is composed of all kinds of Métissage: Kaf-Malbar, Kaf-Petit Blanc, Kaf-Chinois, Kaf-Zorey, Malbar-Petit Blanc, Malbar-Zorey, Malbar-Chinois, Petit Blanc-Chinois, Petit Blanc-Zorey, Kaf-Métis, Malbar-Métis, Métis-Petit Blanc, Métis Métis, Chinois-Métis, Zorey-Chinois and so on.

3: The 'Other' group consists of the new migrants who came to Réunion in the 1990s. They are mainly Mauritians, Vietnamese, North Africans (Second generation of Magrebins born in France), Europeans (Spanish, English, Belgian, Swiss), Canadians, Chinese and West Africans.

### 1.3 Defining ethnic group affiliation

The designation and distribution of ethnic groups will be developed in this thesis. I base these data on private meetings with more than 20 representatives from various institutions such as: INSEE of Réunion, Social Security, Préfecture of Réunion, the University, social clubs and cultural associations of Réunion as well as the Ministère de l'Outre-Mer in Paris, CNARM Paris and ANI Paris. My starting point was the total

official population count of 750,000 inhabitants at the end of 2003. Further information was compiled as follows:

1. For foreigners, official numbers the Comorians, Mahorais (Komor) and Malgache living in Réunion are kept in record by INSEE.
2. Figures for the Zorey group are based on INSEE's official estimates for the various ethnic groups residing in Réunion and could be derived from the question regarding 'birth place'. With the help of some employees of INSEE and Social Security (who are also cultural activists but wish to remain anonymous), I isolated those who were born outside of Réunion by using their Social Security numbers. The first 5 digits of the Social Security number indicate the individual's place of birth. In the case of the Zorey who were born in Réunion, one can determine whether their parents were born in France or not. It is unlikely, for example, that there are Réunionnais who were born in France after emigration in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Those born in Réunion (i.e. after emigration) in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s of Zorey parents can be considered first generation Zorey. In contrast, children born in France of Réunionnais parents are first generation Réunionnais. The same applies for the Comorians, Mahorais and Malgache born in Réunion. They can be considered as in a transition phase, passing a transitive identity. Children of the third generation have an ethnic group identification according to where they are born. For instance, a third generation Réunionnais born in Paris is a Parisian while Komor or Zorey born in Réunion are Réunionnais. Statistically these new ethnic identities are likely to be seen in the next few years.



3. Figures for the Other group are officially recorded by INSEE.
4. Figures for the Zarab group are estimated by the Muslim community of Réunion itself, calculated according to numbers of wedding invitations. These numbers were given to me by the General Secretary of the Muslim association of Réunion (Mrs Badat) and the spokesperson of Groupe Inter-Religieux (Mr Banian) who is also a member of several Muslim associations. An estimate is also given by Ismael-Daoudjee.<sup>11</sup>
5. For the Chinese group, an estimate is again made according to the number of wedding invitations as well as birth announcements. These were provided by several members of different Chinese associations in Réunion. I also received some figures from the president of the Federation of Cultural Chinese associations in Réunion (Mr Ah-Line) and the president of Chinese Temple of St-Denis (Mr Chane-Tune). Taken together, these give an estimate of the Chinese population in Réunion. An estimated number is also given in the thesis of Richard Lee Tin.<sup>12</sup>
6. For the Karane group I obtained almost exact figures from members of the only Shiite Mosque, which is located in Moufia near the University of Réunion.
7. Figures for the Gros Blanc group are estimates from some members of Cercle Genealogic de Bourbon, and were given to me personally.

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<sup>11</sup> Ismael-Daoudjee, A. (2002). *Les Indo-Musulmans Comparatifs*. St-André: GRATHER éditions.

<sup>12</sup> Lee Tin, R. (2000). *Les Chinois de La Réunion*. Thèse de Doctorat. Paris: EHESS.

8. Figures for the Malabar groups are estimates from several studies by Anglophone scholars (and some French scholars) on Indian migration in the world, as well as other studies on Indian indentured labourers worldwide since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup> To these I added an estimate by some historians of Réunion, to obtain an average estimate of all available sources.
9. For the Petit Blanc, Kaf and Métis groups I give my own estimate on the basis of the 'official figures' received from the people interviewed above, I obtained this estimate by logical subtraction. I also took into account the average of my questionnaire results (699 questionnaires requesting the ethnic classification of the respondents) in my calculations.
10. The various representatives listed above gave me specific figures and I calculated percentages based on these figures. Combining all this data I arrived at final estimates of the ethnic groups of the population in Réunion. Several researchers have attempted in the past to give a numerical estimation of the ethnic groups in Réunion, but have neglected percentages. Most only calculated estimates for between five and seven ethnic groups. By contrast, I give an estimate for all the ethnic groups, eleven in total, living in Réunion in 2003. The table below provides estimates by other researchers.

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<sup>13</sup> See the work of Tinker, H. (1974) *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour overseas, 1830-1920*. London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations. See also Clark, G., Peach, S. Venotvec (eds) (1990). *South Asian Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. See also Mahajan, U. (1977) 'Slavery, Indian Labour and British Colonialism: a Review Article', *Pacific Affairs*, 50(2): 263-271.

Table 1.2: Ethnic group affiliation (from other researchers in Réunion)

Ethnic Origins	ESTIMATE (1) 1966		ESTIMATE (2) 1968		ESTIMATE (3) 1974		ESTIMATE (4) 1974		ESTIMATE (5) 1990		ESTIMATE (6) 1994	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
Metis	44.11	183,500	40.18	180,000	41.96	200,000					40.0	240,000
Kaf	25.00	104,000					35.20	198,000			5.0	30,000
Malbar / Tamoul	24.04	100,000	22.33	100,000	25.18	120,000	19.56	110,000	34.48	200,000	25.0	150,000
Petit Blanc			29.01	130,000	23.98	114,300	29.33	165,000			25.0	150,000
Zorey	2.04	8,500			1.19	5,700	1.78	10,000	5.17	30,000	1.0	6,000
Chinois	3.60	15,000	4.02	18,000	3.14	15,000	3.91	22,000	6.90	40,000	3.0	18,000
Zarab	1.21	5,000	4.46	20,000	1.04	5,000	4.89	27,500	3.45	20,000	1.0	6,000
Komor												
Gros Blanc												
Malgache												
Karane												
Others					3.51	16,731	5.33	30,000				
Creole									50.0	290,000		
Total:	100.0	416,000	100.0	448,000	100.0	476,675	100.0	562,500	100.0	580,000	100.0	600,000

## Sources:

- (1) Chaudenson, R. (1974). *Lexique du Parler Créole à La Réunion*. T.1. Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion. P. XIV
- Scherer, A. (1966). *Histoire de La Réunion*. Paris: PUF, p. 23
- (2) Atelier de l'Urbanisme de Réunion, (1968) in Labache, L. (1997). *L'ethnité...* and see also INSEE.
- (3) Data from INSEE, Census 1974.
- (4) Reverzy, J-F. (1990). *L'Espoir Transculturel. Cultures, Exils et Folies dans l'Océan Indien*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- (5) Squarzon, R. (1989). *Le peuplement de Réunion: depuis 1848, dans un processus de déréalisation, une recombinaison féconde à l'œuvre*. St-Denis: Colloque 'Culture et Développement à La Réunion'.
- (6) Mazran, H. (1994). *Géopolitique de l'Océan Indien*. Paris: CHEAM, La Documentation Française.

As Labache<sup>14</sup> argues, the researchers who gave these figures seem to place much emphasis on their empirical knowledge of the field. There are differences between reported figures for the Zarab and Chinois populations in Réunion. The Zorey population has always been underestimated. There was also confusion with Métis and Kaf populations being counted together and no accurate figures were reported for the Komor and Others groups.

<sup>14</sup> Labache, 1997: 192.

#### 1.4 Problematic of the thesis

Thanks to the particular historical and cultural features of Réunion's own form of creolisation, coexistence between the communities has been possible until the present. However, the economic mutations engendered by Départementalisation are upsetting the social balances sufficiently to call into question the likelihood of coexistence in the future. To address this question I shall look at how creolisation resisted the effects of a 'Départementalisation' at the cultural level. In considering the history of population the question needs to be asked whether the idea of a creolisation, defined as a form of local identity formation, is viable in a context of metropolitan assimilation. My objective is to describe the structure of identity in a Creole society. In particular I ask the following questions:

- What is the role of creolisation in the process of identity formation in a neo-colonial setting?
- How is the Réunionese society founded on creolisation characterized in the collective memory?
- How can identity segment into several identities or alternatively how can several identities converge into one identity in different spheres?
- How are components of Réunionese identity formed through language or sociocultural, political and economical structures?
- How is one able to negotiate the concept of identity through the transformation of values and social relations in this Réunionese society?
- Can cultural and social creolisation avoid hegemony and domination in a multicultural and multiethnic society such as Réunion?

In the next six chapters I shall look at how a multicultural society came to be set up in Réunion before going on to examine how cultural and economic models shaped the evolution of a Réunionese identity.

### 1.5 Plan of the thesis

At this stage, it must be noted that the plural character of the Réunionese Creole society problematises the analysis of the evolution of identity. In the second chapter, I will examine the theoretical contribution of some scholars on the theme of identity and creolisation. The first part of Chapter 2 will consider the concept of identity formation from the perspectives of individual psychology, social psychology and sociology. In this opening debate I will discuss the views of some sociologists and social psychologists regarding identity formation. I will deal with Réunionese identity formation rather than identity construction. This difference is to be found either in private or public sphere with an intermediate 'hidden' and 'negotiated' sphere. These differences have to do with the neo-colonial situation of Réunion. The second part of Chapter 2 will focus on the debate on whether creolisation can be moved from the linguistic level to the sociocultural space. Finally, at the end of Chapter 2, I will look at contemporary creolisation. In this section I will compare and contrast my own ideas on the creolisation process with those of anthropologists and sociologists. A number of key issues arise from this statement and the following discussion will give the reader a better understanding of my view regarding the concepts of identity and creolisation.

Of the seven chapters that constitute the body of this thesis, the third chapter consists of a recounting of identity evolution in this society from a historical perspective. I will try to illustrate this through several Réunionese cultural changes, for instance through slavery, colonisation and Départementalisation. In Chapter 3 I will discuss the sociolinguistic element, especially with respect to the formation of the Creole language in Réunion. This allows us to understand the formation of Creole culture and consequently the formation of identity. I will define identity formation as the interaction between language, cultural identity and social context in the specific case of Réunion. I will consider Réunionese identity formation with regard to cultural exchanges and economic, historical and political context. I will also look at the origins of the settlement and the sociohistorical conditions of the island. Furthermore, I will trace the chronological progress of three different notions of 'multicultural', 'intercultural' and 'transcultural' Réunionese society and go on to relate these to the local, national and international environment.

Chapters 4 and 5 present empirical data. The data was gathered through a survey and using a sample representative of all social and ethnic groups. The survey was conducted from 10 January 2002 to 10 September 2002 in several phases and included people from different regions of Réunion. In this 'national' survey I focus on attitudes and intentions emphasizing the difficulties of an analysis of identity formation in the complex Réunionese Creole society. I selected a specific target group of people born after the Second World War as explained in these two chapters. My aim in chapters 4 and 5 is to highlight the socio-cultural phenomena that I witnessed and those I expected to encounter.

The sixth chapter presents the dynamic case studies of the fieldwork (in the form of a questionnaire and observation of cultural activist associations). I will examine the consequences of the process of Départementalisation by means of an analysis of Chapters 4 and 5 and by introducing the concept of a 'heteronomous' identity (in contrast to an 'autonomous' identity) to describe the identity born of these political and economic processes. The long-distance of Réunion from Paris was ignored in the legal statute integrating Réunion into France but it had profound consequences at an economic, social and political level. I will subsequently show that Départementalisation reinforced the control of knowledge and power by French institutions, as well as related violence in various discourses and practices. My aim is to re-define social and identity transformations, bearing in mind the cultural and ethnic plurality and the conjoined sentiments of allegiance to both Réunion and France. My study is therefore focused on a transcultural situation in a non-European and metropolitan space and context. I will conduct a re-evaluation of the notion of neo-colonialism in the Réunionese context.

In the final chapter, I challenge the literature with concluding arguments regarding such issues as the significance of the study in the long term and explain some interesting new findings I have made. A focus on political actions of cultural activists, which are basically a means to attempt to express a 'Renaissance' Réunionese cultural identity and nationalism will be the foundation for a final discussion of the effects of permanence and alteration in the formation of Réunionese identity throughout the periods of slavery, colonialism and Départementalisation.

The introduction of the concept of Réunionese identity to the field of Sociology will bring previously undiscovered knowledge to light. It is important to understand the

historical, social and political forces in a multicultural society. Attention will be focussed on the unique position of members of Réunionese society as French citizens whilst living 10,000 km from metropolitan France. The thesis ends with a related chapter offering a historical outline of the formation of Réunionese culture, language and the Départementalisation environment. The major criticism levelled at almost all of the existing literature is its tendency to refute, or minimize the position of Réunionnais subjects in the construction and formation of their identity. Prominence is placed in the thesis on the role played by Réunionnais subjects in producing their own identity. I can legitimately assert to having wide personal experience and intimate knowledge of Réunion while living within Réunionese society. Since the late 1970s I have been part of the popular social environment, cultural and sport associations and have thus observed the tendencies portrayed in the thesis throughout the period of Départementalisation. Having used my daily interaction with subjects to investigate matters generally pertinent to the topic of the thesis, I can claim to have been a genuine participant-observer to these trends for the last decade. However, personal experience is by definition restricted and at no point in this thesis does any controversial issue or main point of explanation hinge on subject account. Where I draw on personal experience this indicated and referenced in the thesis.



## CHAPTER II

### Identity Formation and the Presence of Creolisation

#### 2.1 Introduction

There are many approaches to the issue of identity and many of the general discussions and debates are on the psychological or anthropological level. My focus here is on the sociological debate on identity formation and how this informs the creolisation process.

The first thing that needs to be said is that these concepts are concerned with identity formation in relation to historical processes, but also with cultural and social interactions of selfhood in the context of multiculturalism or plurality in this given space. In the case of Réunion, the heritage of slavery, indentureship and Départementalisation were important in the identity formation of the subjects of this island. In this chapter, I will examine the theoretical contribution of some scholars on the theme of identity and creolisation. In general terms, identity is virtual and intangible but vital for an individual or a group of subjects in a particular space and time to give meaning to their existence and being.

The chapter will be divided into two parts. The first part will examine how the concept of identity formation from an individual psychological, social psychological and finally sociological standpoint. In this opening debate I will present the views of certain sociologists and social psychologists such as Talcott Parsons, Henry Tajfel and Stuart Hall with regard to identity formation. The core of Réunionese identity, which was

formed during slavery and colonialism and developed throughout Départementalisation, is contested and I discuss this notion in this chapter and throughout my thesis.

The second part of the chapter will show the debate about creolisation was derived from Linguistics and moves to the sociocultural space. I will then develop my own ideas regarding the process of creolisation in dialogue with the views of other anthropologists and sociologists such as Ulf Hannerz, Edouard Glissant and Thomas Eriksen. Finally, at the end of this chapter, I will delineate contemporary creolisation on the island. In this theory, Creole identities can be conceived as an emergent 'Réunionese identity formation' (a similar process is found in Brazil, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean islands and Cape Verde).

What I am mainly concerned with here is how a broad social identity can segment into several identities and how several identities can converge into one identity. However, collective identity forms the individual identity of the subject in the society. But how is identity formed individually and collectively in a different space and time? Which identity formations are included in these various understandings? How could these persons share different cultural resources, communicate in a common language, create relationships and form and reproduce a collective social organisation?

A number of key issues arise and the following discussion will permit the reader to better understand my view regarding the notions of identity and creolisation.

## 2.2 The social basis of identity formation

The first theorists working on identity formation were psychologists and largely covered the area of childhood and adolescence. Studies of identity formation focused on issue of individual development. Psychologists suggested that there was either a normal or a

pathological upbringing. Psychologists believed that if identity construction was interrupted by factors such as trauma (such as death or violence) and displacement during childhood identity formation would be compromised. More than 45 years ago Erik Erickson pointed out that 'cultural and historical changes can prove traumatic to identity formation'.<sup>15</sup> Violence usually prevents identity affirmation, but as Fanon argued<sup>16</sup> an identity sometimes needs violence in order to be developed and heard. Psychologists during the 1960s and 1970s worked in the aftermath of a Freudian analysis and discussion on sexuality. Freudians also saw stages of development involved with sexuality. The interruption of this development might be detrimental to the formation of the individual's personality<sup>17</sup> through trauma or pathological interruption. Research primarily focused on personal identity, but the focus shifted to social identity and group identity with the study of identity formation from a sociological perspective. These notions reflected new forms of politics and new representations of national identity.

Sociologists have differing views of identity. For Parsons, identity is a subsystem of individuality which functions mainly to determine a person's contribution in social organization. In other words, it concerns the role of a person in society and group identification. This is open to include the identification of a person with a membership group even though this person does not belong to the group. An important point, according to Parsons, is that 'in the social space, it selects for emphasis the components that are least deeply involved in the personality of the individual and its moral grounding

<sup>15</sup> Erickson, E. (1968). *Identity, Youth and Crisis*. New York: Norton. p. 159

<sup>16</sup> See Fanon, F. (1962). *Les Damnés de la Terre*. Paris: Maspéro.

<sup>17</sup> See Freud, S. (1961). 'On the internalization of sex role: The feminine case' in Parsons, Shils, Naegle, and Pitts, eds. *Theories of Society*. Vol. 2. Glencoe: The Free Press.

in the culture and the institutions of society, the economic components'. He also proposed a causal link between social identity needs and various forms of intergroup behaviour. His discussion about identity assumes a stable social structure, which is based on the rigid and mechanical way in which a group is founded. In the context of Réunion, there is a more fluid and more complex social structure built on migrations from various places at different strategy. Réunionese society is more fluid, situational and post-colonial in description. Even in a small population such as Réunion there is a very complex development from a society based on slavery and indentureship to a 'Départementalisée' society. A Parsonian analysis cannot cover this long continuity.

Tajfel's concern on the other hand is that 'social identity in intergroup relations must be analysed in ways which take explicitly into account the wider social contexts within which the groups function'.<sup>18</sup> Each group in society is composed of individuals, but if each individual is not conscious of its status and place in this unit, the group would not be formed with any cohesive force. Union comes about as a consequence of the awareness of each allied individual. This union is a function of the representation of the individual who, in turn, gives force to the group or society. Therefore, each individual must be vigilant of its own identity to reinforce the allied collective identity of the society. From all this follows that the social identity of each individual is important for a group and their collective identity, which is the backbone of a society. According to Tajfel social identity is that

'part of the individuals' self concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership' [...] 'Social identity as defined [...] is thus best considered as a shorthand term used to describe limited aspects

<sup>18</sup> Tajfel, H., ed. (1982). *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p. 5

of social behaviour'.<sup>19</sup> [...] Social identity of an individual conceived as his knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of his membership can only be defined through the effects of social categorisations segmenting an individual's social environment into his own group and others'.<sup>20</sup>

I observe that when one has a social identity one can define the 'Self' and the 'Other'. From this it follows that one can also undertake social classification in a society. It would appear that social identity is natural or instinctive: it is the consequence of individual socialisation. One needs to maintain one's individual identity amongst a collective or group identity that seeks cohesion in a complex space (eg. a multicultural society where different groups coexist). In this way how 'identity is learned in the process that we concretely call social interaction' <sup>21</sup> i.e. through cross-communication with the other. It might justifiably be assumed that the affirmation of an identity occurs through this interaction with the others which make up the group in an 'identity strategy'; it then manifests itself in different ways according to circumstances.

Social identities that also form national identities are not only the consequence of sociological factors. According to Carolyn Vogler <sup>22</sup> factors such as social classification, boundaries and processes of identification are also important. She feels strongly that they have a significant emotional dimension which coexists with but cannot be reduced to the social. As Vogler would argue, it is not only the interaction of the economy, politics and culture, each with their own dynamics,<sup>23</sup> which should be considered. We need to consider also how they interrelate with unconscious psychological processes and

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<sup>19</sup> Tajfel, H. (1978). 'Social Categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison' in H. Tajfel (ed.) *Differentiation Between Social Groups*. London: Academic Press. p. 63

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67

<sup>21</sup> Parsons, T. (1969). *Politics and Social Structure*. Basingstoke: MacMillan. p. 20

<sup>22</sup> Vogler, C. (2000). 'Social identity and emotion: the meeting of psychoanalysis and sociology', *The Sociological Review*.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29

strong emotions such as love, hate, shame and anger,<sup>24</sup> which take place within the group or collective identity. All of this will allow us to understand the perseverance and reinforcement of nationalism and national identities in the contemporary world. In the case of Réunion this will lead to an improved understanding of how group relationships influence people's emotional response in intergroup contexts. Few would criticize the claim that the power of social identity has relevance to emotion, intercultural communication, and identity processes in culturally varied groups.

People's social identities are sustained primarily through social comparisons. This can include understanding intergroup relationships in order to prevent discrimination and racism. A good integration of these two theories could lead to a better understanding of some phenomena linked to collective identity such as social cohesion, nationalism, interethnic conflicts or racism. All of this allows a social existence and defines the identity process and the formation of social identity along the lines of Bourdieu's notion of identification by the *habitus*.<sup>25</sup> For him habitus is 'the division in logic classes which organise the perception of the social [and cultural] world'<sup>26</sup> where identity is formed through the socio-cultural practices of men and women in the institutions.

Therefore social identity refers to a person's self-definition in relation to others. It is important to distinguish this public, or social, aspect of identity from the more individual aspects. Social identities are not only traits, physical attributes, or interpersonal styles but are also constructed around behaviour patterns. For instance, in Réunion, the 'space' for each 'race' results in a territorialising of each social identity so

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 35

<sup>25</sup> See Bourdieu, P. (1979). *La Distinction. Critique Sociale du Jugement*. Paris: Minuit.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 191

that one cannot talk of transnational and subnational identities since it is not a cosmopolitan city and there are no links with the native countries and cultures.<sup>27</sup>

From a forced 'deterritorialisation of social identities'<sup>28</sup> during slavery and indentureship Réunion has moved to a reterritorialisation of each social identity formation in a new diasporic space. Robin Cohen argues that one cannot reduce social identity to class identity only,<sup>29</sup> as 'gender, age disability, race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, civil status even musical style and dress codes, are also very potent axes of organization and identification'.<sup>30</sup> He further suggests that identity is formed in a 'different and more complex way, from a greater variety of 'building blocks', which presupposes that some solid structures of identity can or will emerge'<sup>31</sup> in this kind of diasporic setting.

Social identity can be employed as an instrument of socialization and as a tool for social, economic and political ends. All this may contribute to making a difference between an objective and subjective identity. Ultimately, there is a strong possibility that identity production is a kind of illusion.

### 2.3 The fragmentary nature of identity

According to Lawrence Grossberg, identity is always influenced by the 'temporary and unstable effect of relations which define identities by marking differences'.<sup>32</sup> Thus the emphasis here is on the multiplicity of identities and differences rather than on a

<sup>27</sup> See Cohen, R. (1997). *Global Diasporas: An introduction*. London: UCL Press.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 129

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 129

<sup>30</sup> Cohen, R. (1994). *Frontiers of identity: the British and the others*. London: Longman. p. 205 and Cohen, 1997: 129.

<sup>31</sup> Cohen, 1997: 129

<sup>32</sup> Grossberg, L. (1996). 'Identity and Cultural Studies: Is 'That All There Is?' in Hall, S. and P. Du Gay eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage. p. 89

singular identity and on the connections or articulations between these fragments or differences. I observe that the process of political identification was elaborated during the last few centuries in the affirmations of democratic institutions and the nation-state. For Ronan Le Coadic the '*détour*' by symbol and myth shows clearly that the concept of identity is essentialist: 'identity is the deep nature, the permanent part of the society'.<sup>33</sup> Identity is 'unreal'; it forms part of the mind and differs from representation which is expressed superficially. For Stuart Hall interpreting identity as representation is more realistic. A representation is not an immaterial 'essence' but something that has to be formed.<sup>34</sup> However, representation also supposes a kind of 'identity strategy' involving a voluntary intervention of consciousness and reason which may be limited in reality. Hall draws our attention to the fact that our lives have been 'transformed by the struggle of the margins to come into representation. Not just to be placed by the regime of some other or imperializing eye but to reclaim some forms of representation for themselves'.<sup>35</sup>

Here again we see that there is a confrontation with the Other, in a case where (I infer) the Other is the *différent* and when this *différence* invades your territory. It is in this situation that identity becomes visible and the process of representation begins. Hall asserts that identity is always a 'structured representation which only achieves its possibilities through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the Other before it can construct itself'.<sup>36</sup> Identity is formed based on difference to the Other. In this way contact zones are the places of formation of identity(ies).

<sup>33</sup> Le Coadic, R. (1998). *L'Identité Bretonne*. Rennes: Presse Universitaires de Rennes. p. 51

<sup>34</sup> Hall, S. (1991) 'Ethnicity: Identity and Difference', *Radical America*, 23, (4).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21



Denis-Constant Martin leads us to another side of the question:

'Identity implies both uniqueness and sameness. The only way to circumscribe an identity is by contrasting it against other identities. Consequently, identity is an ambiguous notion. It gets its meaning from what it is not, from the Other: like a word in a cross-word puzzle, it is located in a place where uniqueness, defined in a negative way, meets a sameness which needs an 'eliteness' to exist'.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, one can say that identity is a notion of antinomy because it is at the same time both what it unifies by similarity and what it separates by difference. Hall asserts that identities are firstly 'attribution by the Other'.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, identity formations are also membership claims. He advances the case that 'the notion that identity has to do with people that look the same, feel the same, refer to themselves by the same name, is nonsense. As a process, as a narrative, as a discourse, it is always told from the position of the Other'.<sup>39</sup> Discursive actions form the core of individual and group identities. Similarly, Grossberg argues that 'the struggle over representations of identity [...] takes the form of offering one fully constituted, separate and distinct identity in place of another'.<sup>40</sup> Identity is therefore always in action, in a situation of contact, never rigid and always volatile and influenced by its environment. Zygmunt Bauman adds 'if the *modern* 'problem of identity' was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the post-modern 'problem of identity' is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open'.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Martin, D.-C. (1995) 'The Choices of Identity', *Social Identities*, 1 (1) p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> Hall, S. (1991) 'The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity' in King A. K., eds. *Culture, Globalization and the World-System*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. p. 16.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>40</sup> Grossberg, 1996: 89.

<sup>41</sup> Bauman, Z. (1996). *From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a short History of Identity* in S. Hall, S. and P. Du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage. p. 18.

See also the work of Bauman, Z. (1999). *Intimations of Postmodernity*. London: Routledge.

I understand by this formulation that 'post-modernity' in terms of identity, is merely a new term to redefine modernity with regard to the notion of identity, thereby resolving ambiguity. By this, I mean to say that modernity has not arrived in those places where a post-modern world does not yet exist. In such cases, one still needs to think in terms of a modern, rather than a post-modern, identity. I am doubtful that post-modernity is helpful as a theory and I do not believe that it leads to a greater understanding of the question of identity. 'Post-modernity' has become a way of referring to ambiguity or confusion without resolving the problems or resolving them only at a superficial level, by a change in terminology. If one looks beyond the term 'post-modernity' one finds that the separate identities within the multiple identities need separate explanations. The best way of summing up post-modernity is as a superficial understanding of the ambiguities of multiple identities. The deconstruction of social structure in Réunion with different identities in offers a partial answer to the post-modernist point.

One can see here the probable worrying outcome of existing with an ambiguous identity in a context where the expression of a supposed 'pure identity' is the final honour. Such groups and individuals have to subsist with continuous identity uncertainty, indecision and very frequently are the object of shame, sadness, hurt and humiliation. It would appear here too that identity formation is never completed. Paradoxical though it may seem, today one is within limits, able to choose not only one's identity, one's culture and one's way of life, but one can also negotiate identity within a society or a group.

Identity formation and self-image serve essential functions for individual life and constitute an important psychological process as I have argued. Identity formation is

characterised by the management of similarity as long as there is no affirmation of differences. These differences also appear during an identity crisis. An identity crisis involves successive stages whereby identity develops, affirms, modifies and reorganizes itself. An identity crisis does not only concern the individual but may also affect a group of people or a society: a collective identity. Réunion, as well as several other countries that suffered under colonialism, is now experiencing an identity crisis; these countries seek their own real national identities. Denis-Constant Martin believes that 'identities are constructed and that the process of formation, which makes possible the utterance of an identity narrative, implies borrowing from the Other as well as 'correcting' the past'.<sup>42</sup>

Identity is chosen, or negotiated, within the family and the space and time environment. Identity in this sense is not based on values and norms of everyday life, but rather transmitted by memory through oral tradition. Hall argues that it seems to be in 'the attempt to rearticulate the relationship between subjects and discursive practices that the question of identity recurs or rather, if one prefers, to stress the process of subjectification to discursive practices'.<sup>43</sup> By this, he means that identities are momentarily detached until the moment that 'discursive practices' form the subject. In this sense 'discursive practices' are part of the social formation of the subject or a group of subjects.

Therefore all the values and norms derived from imagined identity stay outside of the social environment of the subject and form part of subjective identity. Thus identity is formed and constructed in individuals by means of certain unconscious emotional processes that correspond to relevant cultural practices and economic processes.

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<sup>42</sup> Martin, 1995: 9.

<sup>43</sup> Hall, S. (1996). *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage. p. 2

Grossberg argues that 'subjectivity [...] is abstract. And within human societies at least, it is always inscribed or distributed within cultural codes of differences that organise subjects by defining social identities'.<sup>44</sup> Here again culture and tradition are essential in the formation of identity; subjects need these in order to direct their own social identity formation. Stuart Hall also points out that identities are never completed but that they are 'always as subjectivity itself is, in process. Identity is always in the process of formation. Identity means, or connotes, the process of identification of saying that this here is the same as that, or we are the same together, in this respect [...] structure of identification is always constructed through ambivalence'.<sup>45</sup> I will now move on to explain why I chose to study identity formation rather than identity construction.

#### 2.4 Difference between formation and construction of identity

The distinction between formation and construction with regard to identity has sociological and historical aspects associated with the State. In providing a synthesis of Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale's book,<sup>46</sup> Jean-Francois Bayart<sup>47</sup> uses the terms construction and formation of the State. The distinction he draws is quite simple. On the one hand, State-construction is 'a conscious and wilful creation, a system of political control'.<sup>48</sup> In Réunion, for instance, public policies of the State are implemented by the politicians, the public administration and the civil servants through the policy of Départementalisation implemented in 1946. Identity construction also appears through

<sup>44</sup> Grossberg, 1996: 99.

<sup>45</sup> Hall, 1991: 16.

<sup>46</sup> Berman, B. and J. Lonsdale. (1992). *Unhappy Valley. Conflict in Kenya and Africa*, vol. 1, State and Class, vol. 2, Violence and Ethnicity. Londres, Nairobi, Athens, James Currey, Heinemann Kenya, Ohio University Press.

<sup>47</sup> Bayart, J-F. (1993). 'à l'ors de la 'vallée malheureuse' de l'Africanisme', *Revue française de Science Politique*.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 137. My translation.

the imposition of various aspects of the French model such as the fiscal system, the health system and the urban landscape including infrastructure such as roads, stadiums and buildings. Apart from this construction which results from practices imposed by the French status of Réunion, another dimension of identity construction exists on a symbolic level. The omnipresence of the French flag and *La Marseillaise* (the 'national' anthem) at all sport events (for instance when French national football or handball teams play) and 14 July celebrations in Réunion contribute to the unconscious reinforcement of a sense of belonging to the French nation.

Furthermore, the construction of this 'national identity' is relayed by the behaviour, practices and discourse of the Zorey living in Réunion, who have implemented metropolitan projects since the beginning of Départementalisation.

Following the hypothesis of Bayart, the aim of State-construction is to arrive at a metropolitan identity, in short a French identity. Today, the situation in Réunion shows that French identity construction by the State has been very successful. This is different to the situation in other societies where the construction of the state has generated a weak national identity. For example, certain groups living in the Indian Ocean zone have had their identity imposed through the Berlin Treaty, and later by colonisation. Even after independence, there is no strong feeling of a uniform sense of national identity. Bayart shows that a State is not only constructed by public policies. Rather one must also understand its formation, and take into account the unconscious influence of unidentified factors.

As Bayart argues, State-formation is 'an involuntary and historical process, with conflicts, contradicting negotiations, which [...] leads to compromises by the

anonymous people [and transactions] between the different groups'.<sup>49</sup> These transactions include transculturalism, creolisation and especially métissage. Thus, State-formation includes all social practices which interfere with public policies, be they tensions, clashes and opposition or sometimes, on the contrary, synergies of public policies. In Réunion State-construction is represented by the Gros Blanc from the time of slavery and colonialism until the 1950s, followed by the Zorey since Départementalisation. These two ethnic groups face and oppose the State-formation, represented by the action of unrepresented people, that is to say the slaves, the indentured labours during slavery, and now the mass of the population since Départementalisation. Thus, the processes of identity formation in social creolisation are complex and hidden.

The concepts of State construction and formation lead me to the analysis of colonisation as a system of historical action. Here, the crystallisation of particular identities took place when slavery was combined with the foreign settlement. There are many lifestyles, which shape the State-formation in complex matrices, for instance the birth of the Réunionese tradition. Identity is cultural, political and ideological, but also historical, exposed by the idea of 'identity strategies'. These identity strategies of Réunion were born during the period of slavery. Bayart notes that 'in a post-colonial context, one needs to use the term 'formation' of identity, not the term 'construction''.<sup>50</sup> The political aspect of the construction of identities, for example, is inherent in public and nationalist policies. In Réunion, this influence takes the form of the colonial rule, followed by the French Republic embodied in the notion of 'Francitude' since Départementalisation. The practices of identity formation are evident in the very

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 138. My translation.

<sup>50</sup> Bayart, J. F. (1994). 'Entretien avec Jean-François Bayart', *Revue Esprit*, p. 132. My translation.  
See also (1996). *L'illusion Identitaire*. Paris: Fayard. L'Espace du Politique.

acceptance or rejection of official policies and in attitudes towards other identity references. These reference points have nothing to do with the 'Jacobinism' of the state, or with the policy of assimilation associated with Départementalisation.

In Réunion, the people at the 'top' and those at the 'bottom' exclusively acknowledge and define their identity according to the spaces of domination and participation.

Réunion can be used as a case study or 'laboratory', since many patterns of social behaviour such as alcohol consumption, marijuana consumption and violence have their roots in identity issues.<sup>51</sup> This confirms the idea that both the official French identity and the identity of native origin are constructs based on an imagined 'target' identity which the individual identifies with despite living 10,000 km away from France and thousands of kilometres from Africa, Madagascar, India and China. Just as the Tamoul cannot legitimately connect with India, the Chinois with China, Kaf with Madagascar and Africa or Zarab with North-India, the identification of Réunionnais with France is also imagined. There are continued cultural links and efforts to reconstruct this imagined 'French' identity.

Although it is true that slavery and colonialism have played a key role in the formation and consolidation of these (and other) identities, Réunionese identities are not simply colonial labels imposed by the French. They are made and re-made by Réunionese people themselves in their attempts to give meaning to their everyday lives. Métis identities have been constructed in the context of domination and leave little room for cultural autonomy and control over self-representation. '[Réunionese]

<sup>51</sup> See Marquis, S. (2004). 'Violence et Identité à la Réunion' in Média, I., Labache, I., & P. Vergès, eds. (2004) *Identité et Société Réunionnaise. Nouvelles Perspectives, Nouvelles Approches*. Paris: Karthala. (Forthcoming)

identities were shaped by their position in the middle of the colonial racial hierarchy'.<sup>52</sup>

Next I will discuss identity formation in a neo-colonial setting.

## 2.5 Neo-colonialism and identity formation

Neo-colonialism involves the control of a less-developed nation or state, through language, cultural, political and economic means, by instated colonial rule or military-political conquest. The concept was notably used by Kwame Nkrumah who saw neo-colonialism as

'the worst form of imperialism. For those who practise it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress. In the days of old-fashioned colonialism, the imperial power had at least to explain and justify at home the actions it was taking abroad. In the colony those who served the ruling imperial power could at least look to its protection against any violent move by their opponents. With neo-colonialism neither is the case'.<sup>53</sup>

Nkrumah employs the term 'neo-colonialism' to signify the continuance of imperialism and colonialism by other means. It is used now as a synonym for modern versions of imperialism. Nkrumah aimed to show that the withdrawal by colonial powers at the independence ceremonies of various colonies was in name only. He suggests that Europeans still dominate these countries despite having handed them over and allowing them 'flag independence'. Colonial rulers still hold power and resources in their hands and dominate the former colonies by means of important commercial, business and mining interests. It is not my view that the British, or the French for that matter, show strong evidence that they wanted to continue to dominate their former colonies. As in the period of slavery the colonisers wanted to be rid of the colonies since they were no

<sup>52</sup> Erasmus, Z. (2003) 'Re-imagining Coloured Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa' Talk given in the 'Evolution and Identity' Seminar Series at the University of Cape Town on 15.04.2003.

<sup>53</sup> Nkrumah, K. (1965) *Neo-Colonialism: the Last Stage of Imperialism*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, p. IX



longer profitable. It suited them to proclaim moral virtue at the same time. This was the position articulated by Adam Smith in 1776. Smith also opposed slavery on moral grounds but his main argument was that

'from the experience of all ages and nations, I believe, that the work done by free men comes cheaper in the end than the work performed by slaves. Whatever work he does, beyond what is sufficient to purchase his own maintenance, can be squeezed out of him by violence only and not by any interest of his own'.<sup>54</sup>

Smith believed that the best economy was one in which each person operates with minimal intervention. The rationale was that total liberty fostered competition, which would then bring costs down while production levels and the quality of merchandise remained elevated. Slavery created an unproductive market in that slaves' proprietors were required to procure and keep slaves for all their needs. It would have been cheaper to pay slaves a small salary and not offer them food, housing, clothing, transport, policing for instance, than to frequently procure new slaves and provide for them.<sup>55</sup> According to Adam Smith and other economists of that period, a free labour market was far more desirable. Coming back to the colonial period, the French and English government also believed that colonialism was no longer profitable. The period of decolonisation followed from the same ideology as the pseudo 'progressivist policies' of the former colonies of the slavery period. Nkrumah also argues that the

'neo-colonialism of today represents Imperialism in its final and perhaps its most dangerous stage. The essence of neo-colonialism is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside'.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Smith, A. (1809). *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. London: Ward Locke. (re-ed. of 1776), p. 65

<sup>55</sup> See Smith, A. (1809).

<sup>56</sup> Nkrumah, 1965: p. 1X.

Neo-colonialism is the continuation of the colonial status despite official claims that colonialism has been done away with. In this sense, Réunion is a neo-colony. Its status as at the same time an ex-colony. So how can one define neo-colonialism in Réunion? In many respects colonialism has not disappeared and there is a continuation of control. The complex history of Réunion means that neo-colonialism can be seen here as an implicit perception presaging something more than the formal occupation and organization of the island by France. Réunion was uninhabited before the first settlement in 1663. In 2003, there is still a French presence. Consequently the formal processes of control—the running of the administrative bodies, the provision of armed and military forces and most crucially the absorption of the people as subjects—continues.

Neo-colonialism in Réunion therefore implies an indirect form of control through economic, social and cultural dependence on France. In this case, neo-colonialism is the continued control of Réunion by local elite. French cultural colonialism, and especially the French language, envelopes the Réunionese people in all aspects of social development in the domain of education. This is true of other aspects of cultural life, including cinema, television, art and theatre. While French is not the national language, it is the official language even though the most spoken language is the Creole language. The Creole language represents the most important aspect of identity formation in this neo-colonial setting. The representation of identity also has an evolution; representation of the Other changed before, during and after the periods of slavery and colonialism. Today's representation in the neo-colonial period also varies according to the Centre

metropole and the periphery. It is relevant here to cite the opinion of Homi Bhabha who argues

'we have entered an anxious age of identity, in which the attempt to memorialise lost time, and to reclaim lost territories [...] creates a culture of disparate 'interest groups' or social movements [...] affiliation may be antagonistic and ambivalent; solidarity may be only situational and strategic; commonality is often negotiated through the 'contingency' of social interest and political claims'.<sup>57</sup>

#### 2.51 *Neo-colonialism and private and public sphere*

In the case of Réunion, people may have their own Réunionese cultural identity but also identify with the French and adopt French values, norms and lifestyles. Reunionese identity is evident in the private sphere and French identity in the public sphere. By analysing Breton identity using the same problematic, Michel Wieviorka<sup>58</sup> believes the passage from the private sphere to the public sphere reveals itself indivisible from an assertion of the Breton collective identity. Ethnic identity also plays a strong part in the formation of 'identity politics'. Several cultural values and norms are important in recognising the ethnic identity of a person, or a group of people, within the public sphere. For instance, in Réunion, by devalorising the Creole language, the population does not recognise themselves in their own ethnic identity in the public sphere and this devalorises them as individuals. Identity is heavily influenced by the ethnic group to which one belongs and by the colour of one's skin based on the representation derived from the Other. In this sense it is part of the objective identity. It should be stressed that identity is also formed in the relationship with the Other and appears in social life and in social identity. Hall shows how identities are formed through difference.

<sup>57</sup> Bhabha, H.K. (1996). 'Culture In-Between' in Hall, S. and P. Du Gay eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage. p. 59

<sup>58</sup> Wieviorka, M. (1996). Appendix in Le Goadic, R. *L'Identité Bretonne*. p. 224

'[I]dentity of the subject is fundamentally constituted by that which is not itself, by its constitutive outside. Put in another way, every self or every identity is constituted by that which it lacks, which is the Other. I think that is totally true in humans; so even if in all other dimensions the subject is stitched up, in that dimension it is more than one. It may not be two, but it's more than one'.<sup>59</sup>

I see this identity formation as conveyed by some distinct 'identity forms' which work through a permanent interaction between representation of the self and the appearance of the Other. Grossberg asserts that the 'result is not only that identity is entirely an *historical* construction but that each of the [...] planes of individuation is constructed temporally: subjectivity as internal time consciousness; identity as the temporal construction of difference'.<sup>(61)</sup> Taking into account the difference between the formation of the subject as a Réunionnais or a French person for instance it becomes apparent that the 'Réunionnais' identity is formed on the principle of community and collectivity while the 'French' identity is formed on the notion of civic allegiance and individualist principles. Therefore the representations differ even with regard to the politics of assimilation during Départementalisation. Ultimately, these approaches lead us to think that individual identity may be in harmony with collective identity. Identity as a social representation of a society marks difference and sameness between groups. Included in this are forms of cultural identity, such as food and music, which constitute the core of the national identity formation.

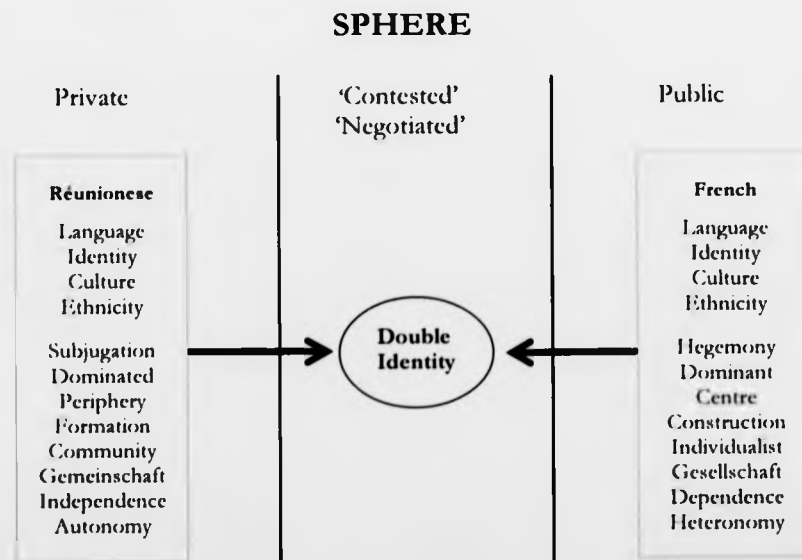
The 'national' identity in Réunion is divided in its collective social identity. Collective identity constructs the 'national' identity, but it is individual identity that finally constructs collective identity. The consistency of this national identity follows the evolution of society and its subjects dictate its political forms. In the case of Réunion, I

<sup>59</sup> Hall, S. (1996). 'When was 'the post colonial'? Thinking at the limit,' in *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, eds. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti. London: Routledge.

<sup>61</sup> Grossberg, 1996: 100.

maintain that national cultural identity diverges from national political identity. National political identity is seen more in the form of patriotism based on unique symbols, such as a flag. It was very hard for formerly colonised or neo-colonised countries to incorporate their cultural diversity represented by a single national flag. In Réunion, the construction of cultural national identity is derived from folklore. By contrast, the political national identity does not exist, except as an imagined French national identity. Therefore, on the one hand, the identity born from community, in the private sphere, is more intimate, more compelling and more strongly held; the individual in the private sphere is a Réunionese person with a Réunionese identity. On the other hand, identity born from civic allegiances is more distant, unconvincing and not very powerful in the private sphere. However, all the signs of the State and French Republic that it represents are very strong in the public sphere where the individual is a French person with a French identity. The following table illustrates the different spheres found in Réunion.

**Figure 2.1:** Three columns of Sphere



According to Habermas, the notion of public sphere (Öffentlichkeit) initially appeared among the 18<sup>th</sup> century bourgeoisie in the coffee houses, salons and tea rooms of European capitals and was informed by the increased access to periodicals and daily newspapers.<sup>61</sup> He claims that the public sphere as an ideal favoured the white, male bourgeoisie. Habermas<sup>62</sup> maintains that bourgeois public sphere personified a more common code of 'publicness' or 'matters of general interest' in which public opinion was counterposed to the personal views and opinions of private individuals. Further, Habermas sees the 'public sphere [as] an arena autonomous of government and partisan economic interests, which is, in principle, dedicated to rational debate and argumentation'.<sup>63</sup> By contrast, Hannah Arendt sees the public sphere or 'realm' to be the final aim of the free people, a place where they can communicate and argue with other free citizens.<sup>64</sup> Arendt calls it 'the sphere within the world which men need in order to appear at all'.<sup>65</sup>

Private sphere is a sphere that protects, cherishes, and makes the individual fit to emerge in the public 'realm'. For her the private sphere ought to be concerned with public matters. Private sphere provides a form of rest or retreat from danger. Private sphere 'always belongs to someone', be it a person or group, a company or individual administration; whereas public sphere is common to all.

In the figure above, one can see that there are two identities, which people reconcile in their own way. They are not in 'open' conflict; they are more in a 'hidden' conflict

<sup>61</sup> See Habermas, J. (1989). The Public Sphere. In: Seidman, Steven, ed. *Juergen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader*. Boston: Beacon Press, 3rd ed., p. 17.

<sup>62</sup> Habermas, J. (1989). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: Polity, p. 39.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>64</sup> See Arendt, H. (1987). The Public Realm: The Common. In: Glazer, N. and M. Lilla, ed. *The Public Face of Architecture: Civic Culture and Public Spheres*. New York: Free, pp. 5-12.

<sup>65</sup> See Arendt, H. (1958). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 28-50.

beneath the surface, with no sign of an open clash between French and Réunionese cultural identities. There is underlying negotiation, competition, resistance and conflict between these two identities. The French government and public discourse created this 'hidden' conflict, which became a 'hidden' sphere, a social space that was safer for the dominated people. For instance, Creole language is being developed in this hidden sphere as a form of resistance to the dominance of the French language.

Today Réunionese people feel uncertain and are searching for an appropriate identity in the public sphere. My work thus concentrates on the 'contested' and 'negotiated' area in the middle (as shown in the figure above) where in education, cultural life, social practices and behaviour, people draw elements from their private lives, which they then try to valorise in the public sphere. What I consider important is the social situation of the people in this 'contested' sphere, as well as the force of socialisation in the different symbolic private and public spheres that form the identity process. Before 1981, people were constrained by public laws and regulations during the assimilation period. A prominent example, cited in Chapter 1.2, was the refusal to allow a population count according to ethnic affiliation in Réunion at this time. This demonstrates how people can live within their private sphere while the law fails to recognise them in terms of number in the public sphere. What exactly is the sphere that people occupy in terms of number? A further example concerns language: children speak Creole in the courtyard but it is not allowed in the classrooms (from primary school to university); politicians speak French in public discourse but Creole when they conduct door to door political campaigns. Employees in the public administration speak French to the public but Creole to their colleagues.

Tönnies explained the phenomenon of this separation of society through the concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* <sup>66</sup> which can also be separated according to sphere. According to Durkheim, who borrowed from Tönnies, 'the family has its source in the physiological constitution of man; it is also the source of *Gemeinschaft*'.<sup>67</sup> For him, in a *Gemeinschaft* society social relationships between individuals are based on affection, kinship or membership of a community, as within a family or group of friends. In Réunion, each population has its own food, clothes, religion (such as Hinduism, Buddhism, or Animism) and especially a shared Creole language. All these features can be contrasted with *Gesellschaft*. *Gemeinschaft* is not only based on community, but also on all the elements derived from the diversity of the group, such as family or community memories, colleagues from the neighbourhood or 'village community', and political, economic or religious associations. 'The life of the group is not a work of individual wills but is completely directed by the groups' habits, customs and traditions'.<sup>68</sup>

By contrast, Durkheim argues that *Gesellschaft* is a 'circle of men who [...] live and dwell in peace, the one beside the other, but instead of being essentially joined are on the contrary essentially separated. While in *Gemeinschaft* they remain linked in spite of distinctions, here they remain distinct despite all the links'.<sup>69</sup> In contrast with *Gemeinschaft*, in a *Gesellschaft* society, the social relationships between individuals are based on their sense of duty to the society or organization. *Gesellschaft* is characteristic of metropolitan centres. In Réunion, all the elements of identity that pertain to civic

<sup>66</sup> See Durkheim, E. (1889). 'Tönnies, F., *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*', *Revue Philosophique* 27: 416-33.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 421

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 426

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 427



allegiances (for example policies, laws, public discourses, educational facilities and the official language) derive from metropolitan France. In other words, *Gemeinschaft* is 'organic', whereas *Gesellschaft* is 'mechanical'. However, Durkheim expresses the view that despite this distinction, *Gesellschaft* is no less natural than *Gemeinschaft*. The 'status' of the Réunionese people under Départementalisation can be seen as a 'contract'. Therefore, if we were to draw on Durkheim's insights, we could regard *Gesellschaft* as the result of *Gemeinschaft*.

Despite the resistance in current Réunionese society, the public sphere will eventually become *Gesellschaft*. In other words, despite such resistance and despite all attempts to retain the Creole language and culture in the public sphere, Réunionese society seems to be becoming closer to French society. The society has been in a transition phase ever since Départementalisation was fully 'adopted' in the 1960s.

Today, French and Réunionese identities run parallel with each other. My argument is that the people of Réunion are continually having to negotiate or situate their identities as they change between their Réunionese and French identities in the private and public spheres. The French official State identity is much stronger than I anticipated it would be; it is more powerful and successful in the population than I had expected. However, the stronger the French identity, the more resistant the Réunionese identity. From the early 1960s to the early 1980s there was a strong policy of assimilation with France in the public sphere and a concomitant devaluing of Réunionese identity. Départementalisation, along with the official Republican laws, reinforced the endeavours of the Gros Blanc and French governors to eradicate the original cultures

and identities of the first settlers on the island. In reaction to the assimilationist policies of Départementalisation a resistance movement emerged in the late 1970s.

Over the last twenty or so years, since 1981, when 20 December was recognised as the date of the abolition of slavery, the Réunionese have tried to bring their own identity into the public sphere. In this dilemma over private and public sphere it can be seen that the process of social formation takes place in a context of power relations between the dominant and the subordinate.<sup>70</sup> Social identity is not only created by the dominant to be adopted by them but is also the product of the negotiation between public and private spheres. The social identities of individuals and groups in Réunion are formed in this 'contested' sphere in which the resistant and hidden Creole culture is developing.

Although in one way France was successful in imposing a French identity on the Réunionese people, attempts to eradicate the Réunionese identity through oppression and undermining its worth were unsuccessful. Today, in order to preserve all the elements from the private sphere it is important to find a place for them in the public sphere. Unless there is recognition in the public sphere of elements from the private sphere, the latter are likely to disappear, thereby undervaluing Creole cultural identity, which will then come to be regarded as inferior. According to Arendt,<sup>71</sup> there is a dichotomy between the public and private spheres; it is not always possible to separate the private from the public sphere; they are interdependent and need each other. There is a sense in which there is an intermingling of identities. When a former identity is partly valued and recognised and partly derided and mocked, a kind of identity conflict or uncertainty is created. The French government has created this conflict-prone neo-

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<sup>70</sup> See Berger, P. L. and T. Luckmann, (1967). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Doubleday, pp 141-152

<sup>71</sup> See Arendt, H. (1958).

colonial identity with alienating policies of assimilation that Départementalisation introduced to Réunion Island.

#### *2.52 Neo-colonialism and creolisation*

In 1946, when the rest of the world was announcing the inevitable demise of colonial empires, Réunion gained the status of a French Département. In the beginning, members of the right wing attacked the move towards Départementalisation on the grounds that they wished to preserve the island's colonial status, whereas the Left saw it as progress for the Réunionese people. The Right wing later changed its position and came to regard Départementalisation as a means of enforcing integration and guaranteeing the island's economic and political dependency. It was thus used to implement assimilationist socio-cultural policies, while Left-wing demands for equality were forgotten. Assimilation occurs through imposing French culture and regarding the Réunionese people's language, values and culture as inferior. With French assimilation imposing an ever-increasing integration of French social, economic and cultural spaces and permeating all social and institutional structures, one begins to witness what Bourdieu describes as 'symbolic violence'.<sup>72</sup>

The media, which plays a crucial role in the construction of a 'desirable' identity, accentuates the 'symbolic violence' embodied in the Zorey model. A perverse consequence of assimilation was observed in the manner in which the people of Réunion imitated the behaviour of their colonists when they themselves colonised a part of Madagascar (Sakay) in the 1960s. This assimilation can be observed in members of

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<sup>72</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1994), *Raisons Pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action*. Paris: Le Seuil.

the new generation who see themselves as more French than Creole and who are 'opposed to the teaching of the Creole language at school'.<sup>73</sup> While it may have failed to modify cultures and traditions, the French language had 'Frenchified' the Creole language to such an extent that the new generation is clearly adopting the French language at the expense of Creole. Though the Creole language initially played an integrating role, the French language is now engulfing it. French is the prestigious language that guarantees social promotion and integration into the socio-economic system (through French-medium work and education, class identities may be eliminated and equal status achieved).

This change suggests that the Creole language may well disappear within a couple of generations and that in fifty years' time it may have lost its status as a vernacular language and continue only as a folkloric language. Réunionese society would therefore witness the first Creole people to lose the language they had inherited from slavery. If this were to happen, French (with some local phonological particularities) would become the language spoken by all on the island. Three hundred years ago Réunion had the same migration movements of people that occur today in all Western megalopolises. Thus the culture is not stagnant but in a process of perpetual movement. Culture and identity are very complex in Réunionese society. Constructed and formed over 350 years of colonialism and neo-colonialism in Réunion, culture and identities are affected by the increasing frequency of cultural exchanges between Metropole and colony. These exchanges are further influenced by the attempted reconstructions of identities of the native countries. A mix of cultures is formed based on the capacity to communicate by

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<sup>73</sup> Labache, J. (1997), 'L'ethnicité chez les jeunes Réunionnais', *Agora Débat Jeunes*, no9, p. 98. My translation.

means of shared languages. This is the basis of Ulf Hannerz's notion of creolisation, which as he explains,

'borrow[s] from particular social and cultural histories by way of more a more generalized linguistics. I will not dwell on the potential of a creolization scenario for peripheral cultures very long [...] and it may be that what I take from a rather volatile field of linguistic thought is little more than a rough metaphor. Yet it has a number of components, which are appropriate enough. I like it because it suggests that cultures, like languages, can be intrinsically of mixed origin, rather than historically pure and homogeneous'.<sup>74</sup>

The concept of 'mixing' is fundamental to the thought of Hannerz. He suggests that all cultures and languages are created and formed, and that purity does not exist ethically or epistemologically. The process of identity definition and formation is linked to investing in a new cultural and political awareness. The structure of this identity is consequently converted into an emancipation performance. It necessitates the co-formation of knowledge between the subordinate and the colonial power. Identity formation is therefore a dynamic and critical process, often led by the intelligentsia and by artists, poets, writers and performers. Research on cultural events and expressions is an important part of probing identity formation in Réunion today (See Chapters 4 and 5). In the particular context of Réunion, creolisation lies at the heart of identity formation. Ulf Hannerz believes that the 'creolisation continuum can be seen in its organisation of diversity to entail a political economy of culture'.<sup>75</sup> Carpanin Marimoutou comments that today one has to go beyond this discourse to discover identity: in the reality of cultural and social practice.<sup>76</sup> One must recall that Réunionese society is structured around social class as well as ethnic divisions.

<sup>74</sup> Hannerz, U. (1992). 'Culture Between Center and Periphery: Towards a Macroanthropology'. *Ethnos* 54/3 & 4, p. 126.

<sup>75</sup> Hannerz, U. (1992). *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Cultural Organization of Meaning*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 127.

<sup>76</sup> See Marimoutou, J.-C. (1988). 'Créolisation, Créolité, Littérature' in Baggioni D. and J.-C. Marimoutou, eds. *Cavumes et Identités*. St-Denis, Université de La Réunion, 1988, 32-45.

Having outlined numerous distinctive theories of identity, the formation of culture in Réunion merits closer examination. For this purpose, it is important to understand how the Creole language was formed at the very beginning of settlement on the island of Réunion. This will be covered in the next section. Ulf Hannerz is a most important scholar, shifting the notion of creolisation from linguistics to a sociocultural space. I will explain this transition next.

## 2.6 The formation of creolisation

### *2.61 Creolisation through language and colonial integration*

Creolisation is a concept found in linguistics. In English-medium sociolinguistic studies, the term 'Creole' has frequently been used to describe new, syncretic languages generally arising from the encounters between European and non-European people in mercantile settings. A Creole language develops in these situations where no shared language, or *lingua franca*, exists. Creole languages develop quickly to facilitate communication and often trade. They were usually based on French, English, Portuguese or Spanish vocabulary. 'Creole' has the relatively fixed meaning of 'a former pidgin language, which has become the mother tongue of a speech community'.<sup>77</sup> This speech community encourages the existence of expanded language(s) and cultural variations. When a Creole language is at the basic stage of creolisation, it plays a great role in the formation of culture. Both languages and cultures are in a constant process of change.

So does the pidgin/Creole cycle have cultural parallels? Does a 'cultural creolisation' reflect an expansion of the 'cultural pidginisation' process? 'The term 'cultural

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<sup>77</sup> Meethrie, R. (2003) Talk held in the 'Creolisation and Identity' Seminar Series at the University of Cape Town on the 21.03.2003.

creolisation' was introduced in Anthropology by Ulf Hannerz in the 1980s.<sup>78</sup> Creolisation is both a linguistic term and an anthropological concept and increasingly a sociological concept. The plantation system brought a new language to the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean, which emerged from a mixture of colonial, African and Indian languages. Since the slaves came from diverse linguistic backgrounds, they were obliged to communicate in an intermediary language that they could all understand. The Creole language would have served to cement relations between the different ethnic components of the slave society and, in all situations, united them as a group against their common slave masters. Through the integrative role that it played, the Creole language formed the basis of the phenomenon of creolisation. It thus integrated different customs and life styles and, as Gilberto Freyre points out for religion, showed 'a huge capacity for syncretism'.<sup>79</sup> The emergent identity resulting from this context is therefore a blend in which 'cultures are hybrid and heterogeneous', bound together and interdependent to the point that they 'challenge all unit description'.<sup>80</sup> In the case of Réunion, the population adopted a form of cultural creolisation that embodied all the subcultures.

However, despite one subgroup wishing to be differentiated from the others within the private sphere of its subculture, these categories do cross and mix with the resultant regroupings bound together by the adjective 'Réunionese'. This leads us to think in terms of a common identity formed around the Creole language having existed since the beginning of colonisation and slavery. Nonetheless, there is no evidence of this identity in the public sphere because it had no political support and, furthermore, clashed with

<sup>78</sup> See Hannerz, U. (1987, 1989, 1990 and 1992).

<sup>79</sup> Freyre, G. (1963). *New World in the Tropics. The Culture of Modern Brazil*, New York: Vintage Book, p. 365

<sup>80</sup> Said, E. (1994). *L'Oréentalisme. L'Orient créé par l'Occident*, Paris: Le Seuil, p. 123

the official French identity-a decisive point. The religion 'imported' at the beginning of slavery played a similar role. As Labache points out, 'Christianity seems to be the point around which all ethnic groups in Réunion gather'.<sup>81</sup> The concept of cultural creolisation describes a historical process and according to Thomas Eriksen refers to the 'intermingling and mixing of two or several formerly discrete traditions or cultures'.<sup>82</sup> Hannerz<sup>83</sup> asserts that creolisation is a sociocultural phenomenon, which develops under particular circumstances. The process of creolisation started among a diaspora of several civilisations in plantation economies located in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean islands. Plantation economies are by definition economic systems put in place during colonialism. The system uprooted and relocated large numbers of people of different races to colonies in South America, the Pacific, Louisiana, the Caribbean islands and the Indian Ocean islands. The different groups of people that made up the plantation system during slavery brought about cultural interaction from which a Creole culture emerged, with Creole people communicating amongst themselves by means of Creole languages. What do we understand by the terms 'Creole person' and 'Creole culture'?

#### *2.62 Creole culture and Creole people*

The Spanish term *criollo* appeared in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and became *Creole* in French. The term originally denoted a person of European background who was born in the 'West Indies'. By extension, the word now tends to designate the black slaves born in America, the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean islands who distinguish themselves completely

<sup>81</sup> Labache, I. (1999). 'Recherche sur l'ethnité à la Réunion' in MIBI. *Revue des Psychologues de la Martinique*, no 2, p. 105. My translation.

<sup>82</sup> Eriksen, T.H. (1999). *Tu dimann pu vini Kreol*. The Mauritian Creole and the Concept of Creolization. Paper presented at the Creolization Seminar of the Transnational Communities Programme: University of Oxford, Michaelmas Term 1999.

<sup>83</sup> See Hannerz, U. (1992). *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Cultural Organization of Meaning*. New York: Columbia University Press.



from the Africa-born slaves: the indigenous people were often considered superior to the Africa-born slaves, because they were Westernized and Christianized at an earlier stage. I concur with Jean-Luc Bonniol<sup>84</sup> that Creole culture is characterised by internal tension, which results from the permanent presence of contradictory schemes likely to influence the behaviour of individuals from Creole societies. 'Creoles are uprooted, they belong to the New World, are the products of some form of mixing, and are contrasted with that which is old, deep and rooted' according to Sydney Mintz.<sup>85</sup> The word 'Creole' may also be used to describe food, architecture or people. We will see that there is an accurate definition of Creole languages in Linguistics and of Creole cultures in Anthropology. I will attempt to formulate a definition of 'Creole society'. According to Benoist the 'Creole language contains and carries all the structural elements not only of Creole thought but also all the cultural material of a world stemming from the clash of civilizations'.<sup>86</sup>

The term Creole can also be applied to other aspects of Creole life such as politics, religion, music and the arts, social relations, medicine, magic, oral literature, fashion, myths, legends and nursery rhymes, as well as the banal activities of daily life. Edward Braithwaite talks of the British and West African components of the Jamaican population developing a new distinct culture and character which is called 'Creole' and this 'Creole culture' being 'part of a wider New World or American culture complex'.<sup>87</sup> Similarly Rex Nettleford talks of 'the new creolised cultural being who now stalks these

<sup>84</sup> See Bonniol J.-L. (2000) 'Les Naissances Multiples de Jean Benoist en Terre Créole' in Bernabé J., Bonniol J.-L., Confiant R. et G. L'Étang, ed. *Au Ventre Luminieux: Des Îles Créoles aux Sociétés Plurielles. Mélanges offerts à Jean Benoist*. Petit-Bourg Ibis Rouge: 25-32.

<sup>85</sup> See Mintz, S. (1996) 'Enduring Substances, Trying Theories: The Caribbean Region as Oikoumene' *Journal of The Royal Anthropological Institute* 2(2).

<sup>86</sup> Benoist, J. (1992) 'Le Métissage: biologie d'un fait social, sociologie d'un fait biologique' in *Métissage linguistique et anthropologie*. T 2, Paris: L'Harmattan, p. 15. My translation.

<sup>87</sup> Braithwaite, E. (1971). *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. p XIII

Caribbean islands'.<sup>88</sup>

Today, the term 'Creole' has different senses in various Creole societies. In Mauritius or Surinam for instance a Creole is somebody who is originally from Africa, in Trinidad it is somebody who does not have an Asian background, in French Guyana a Creole is somebody who has adopted a French or Western lifestyle; in Martinique and Guadeloupe to be a Creole is to use the local Creole languages and also to be competent in dancing *Zouk* and have a particular way of life. To be a Creole in Réunion is to be somebody born on the island, whatever your religion or skin colour, and to differentiate oneself from the French Metropolitan Zorey culture. Nowadays Creole has the same meaning as 'Réunionnais' and distinguishes the inhabitants from those of other French Départements. To be Creole in Réunion also today involves cultural 'métis' or 'mixing'. The main characteristic of Creole culture in the DOM is undoubtedly the use of the Creole language. Problems of Creole identity stem from the plurality and complexity of these societies which are always dependent on their metropolis.

### 2.63 *Creolité and creolisation*

Creolisation is a continuation of the *Creolité* movement, a concept based on the work of Aimé Césaire in the 1970s. This movement ran parallel to the Negritude of Leopold Sedhar Senghor<sup>89</sup> and was carried on by Edouard Glissant in the 1980s. Literature in the 'Praise of Creoleness' was written in the 1990s by authors such as Bernabé, Confiant

<sup>88</sup> Nettleford, R. M. (1978) *Caribbean Cultural Identity*. Kingston: Institute of Jamaica. p. 185

<sup>89</sup> Négritude was referred to by Leopold Sédar Senghor. For him, Négritude is relative to the Negro literature in the colonised countries. It is also the celebration of black identity fighting racism.

See Senghor, L. S. (1945). *Chants d'ombre*. Paris: Le Seuil. See also (1948). *Œuvres Nègres. Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Nègre et Malgache de Langue Française*. Paris: Le Seuil. See also (1962). *Nocturnes*. Paris: Le Seuil.

However, the word Négritude first appeared in Aimé Césaire (1939). *Calvary d'un Retour au Pays Natal*. Paris: Presence Africaine. Négritude for Césaire evokes a black world and the condition of slave life.

and Chamoiseau.<sup>90</sup> What is the *Creolité* movement? *Creolité* is both a political and literary movement. The movement has followers not only in the Caribbean but also in the Indian Ocean and among the DOM-TOM diaspora in France,<sup>91</sup> especially in the suburbs of Paris, Lyon and Marseilles. *Creolité* is a concept used in recognition of the reality of the Creole condition as being different from the Metropolitan and European culture, even if the Creole culture was originally influenced by the French culture. These new-found identities appear in literature, language and artistic expression as well as political claims. The identity search which began with the movement of 'Negritude' is continued in the search for 'Antillanité' or 'Réunionnité'. According to Confiant, *Creolité* rejects uniqueness and universalism, purity and transparency. *Creolité* advocates diversity, opacity and multilingualism.

As Glissant claimed the movement has its roots in Creole language and in the traumatic experiences endured during the slave trade, exile and slavery. The DOM forms a space for this *Creolité* to thrive. Different cultures and religions intermingle, establish a 'relationship' and are transformed. Through *Creolité* 'there was a mix, but without uniformity, a kind of juxtaposition of cultures'.<sup>92</sup> However Richard Burton feels that

'Prospective and progressive in theory, *Creolité* is in practice often retrospective, even regressive, in character, falling back, in a last desperate recourse against decreolization, into the real or imagined Creole plenitude on *an tan lontan* of Martinique and Guadeloupe they were before the 'fall' of Départementalisation or the massive disruptions of the 1960s. There is a danger, in short, that *Creolité* may itself fall prey to the trap of universalism and essentialism so vigorously denounced in the *Éloge de la Créolité*'.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Bernabé, J., Chamoiseau, P. and R. Confiant, (1995), *Éloge de la Créolité*. Paris: Gallimard.

<sup>91</sup> What Robin Cohen terms a 'Diaspora of a Diaspora'. Cohen, R. (1992). 'The Diaspora of a Diaspora: The Case of the Caribbean'. *Social Science Information*, 31 (1).

<sup>92</sup> Glissant, E. (1997) *Traité du Tout-Monde*, Paris: Gallimard, p. 23. My translation.

<sup>93</sup> Burton, R. (1995). 'The Idea of Difference in Contemporary French West Indian thought: Négritude, Antillanité, Créolité' in Burton, R. and F. Reno, eds. *French and West Indian: Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana Today*. Warwick University Caribbean Studies. Basingstoke: Macmillan Caribbean, p. 156.

Creolité moves away from the concept of identity as closed, with stable neat outlines. Begun as a literary trend, and then moving to the cultural and political spaces, *Creolité* is an assertion of identity and an acknowledgement of Creole language, Creole existence and culture as facts. Jean Benoist suggests that *Creolité* anticipated what is now called post-modernity. The new Creole societies, more specifically plantation societies have, for a long time, 'been prefiguring what the contemporary world is experiencing today'.<sup>94</sup> In terms of this theory métis culture is equivalent to 'post-modern culture'. As Glissant argues, creolisation makes diversity its founding principle '*Creolité* sets multilingualism or multi-ethnicism up as a dogma or model'.<sup>95</sup> The new identity brought about by creolisation assumes unforeseeable and ever changing forms, with the 'matrix of creolisation' appearing in a number of different domains including language, music and dance, social relations, religion, medicine, magic, oral literature, architecture, fashion and lifestyles. Cuisine is perhaps the best example of creolisation in everyday life, for it is often the only 'inheritance' of the 'lost culture' of people in exile.

Départementalisation prevented the integration of the DOM in their native countries (the Caribbean, Indian Ocean or America). The culture of the ancestors of the immigrants during slavery and indentureship is not transmitted via grandparents and older relatives. Although it is an integral part of the immigrants' identity, it is gradually forgotten. One could say that creolisation is the process of a mix of cultural identities leading to a new identity, which may be called transculturation.<sup>96</sup> Marimoutou sees

<sup>94</sup> See Benoist, J. (1996). 'Métissage, syncrétisme, créolisation: métaphores et dérivés', *Études Créoles*, 1996, XIX, 1, p. 50. My translation.

<sup>95</sup> Glissant, 1997: 323. My translation.

<sup>96</sup> This concept will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.63.

creolisation as a kind of language métissage and/or cultural métissage. The product of this métissage forms the identity of the subject.<sup>97</sup>

#### 2. 64 *Métissage and creolisation*

Creolisation is seen, then, as a process whereby newly shared cultural forms and new possibilities for communication emerge due to contact. It highlights the open-ended, flexible and unbounded nature of cultural processes, as opposed to the notion of cultures as bounded, stable systems of communication.<sup>98</sup> There are other aspects of the use of the word creolisation that need brief comment. Creolisation is different from the French expression métissage, known as *mestizaje* in Spanish, *mestiço* in Portuguese and 'miscegenation' in English. Métissage took its origin from the biological term describing the hybridisation of two animal or plant species. When extended to humans, Métissage refers to children born of parents from two different ethnic groups. The origins of métissage lie in the context of a port culture with its encounters and exchanges between many unstable communities. Today its nature is principally urban. Métissage signifies the infinite, the unfinished, in perpetual transformation. In general, métissage took place in a non-official relationship between a man from the dominant community and a woman from the dominated community. This was a relationship based on domination and exploitation and a child born from this relationship would be termed a 'bastard'. During the slavery period this relationship was generally between a white man (dominant group) and a black woman (dominated group). The resultant métis (or bastard) was automatically placed in the dominant group. After colonization a

<sup>97</sup> See Manmoutou, C. (1988). 'La cuisine du Cafre en Pays Blanc' in Baggioni, D. et J.-C. Manmoutou, eds. *Cuisines et Identités*. St-Denis: Université de La Réunion.

<sup>98</sup> Eriksen, 1999: 14.

Westernization of the métissage came about. The métis people were brought up and educated in terms of the Western model. The identity process in this case is a mimicry imposed by the Western power. The Métis individual searches for an identity of his/her own to encompass both ethnic heritages, finding him/herself caught between the two. The identity of the Métis is always in construction and formation since it is not based on a 'pure' or 'authentic' ethnic origin. Métissage also took place in the plantations and homesteads in Réunion, between slaves from different ethnic groups, between slaves and indentured labourers from different ethnic groups or between indentured labourers from different ethnic groups.

Creolisation, on the other hand, is an ongoing process that includes both métissage and the various cultural brews concocted from the movements of populations. Though Orlando Patterson acknowledges that new identities are born out of such exchanges, he defines creolisation as 'a process that sees a group developing a proper life style in the place where he is, different from the one of its place of origin'. According to Patterson,<sup>99</sup> there are two distinct types of creolisation. The first, 'segmentary creolisation', refers to the process by which a group or individual member of a creolised society tries to maintain their own culture in a new context. 'Synthetic creolisation', on the other hand, refers to the group's attempt to create a new local culture from the whole range of cultural resources available to the different components that together constitute a creolised society. Though both types of creolisation exist in Réunion, the 'synthetic' form is the more dominant. The distinction between 'segmentary' and 'synthetic' creolisation is also apparent in comparisons between islands that were

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<sup>99</sup> See Patterson, O. (1975). 'Context and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance: A Theoretical Framework and Caribbean Case study' in Glazer, N. and D. P. Moynihan eds *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Harvard University Press, pp. 304-349

formerly British (such as Mauritius) and those that were formerly French. It is interesting to make the comparison between the British model, which is based on community, and the French model, which is based on assimilation.<sup>100</sup>

In this view many writers strongly believe that creolisation is specific to the Caribbean context. According to Sydney Mintz, creolisation is particular to the Caribbean and it is a 'combination of processes [...] to achieve [...] unique results'.<sup>101</sup>

Espelencia Baptiste, former student of Sydney Mintz, agrees that 'creolisation is a process of cultural mixing that cannot be applied to regions outside of the Caribbean'.

<sup>102</sup> She maintains that creolisation, treated as the development of both Creole languages and cultures is particular to plantation societies. However, plantation societies are not confined to the Caribbean but also occur in the Indian Ocean as well as Goa, Fiji or Natal in South Africa. Moreover, I would suggest that the historical context of the plantation system brought about a particular form of the creolisation process. I note, for example, that in the Caribbean for most islands the creolisation process is based in majority on the interactions between the African and European cultures (the indigenous population has largely disappeared killed by diseases, occupation and military forces).<sup>103</sup>

In Brazil the creolisation process is based on the contact between African, European and Amerindian cultures.<sup>104</sup> In the Indian Ocean, the creolisation process is based on the contact between African, Malgache, European and Indian and Asian cultures.<sup>105</sup>

Creolisation is thus not limited to the geo-historical context of the Caribbean during

<sup>100</sup> See Médica, I. (2002) 'Creolisation and Globalisation in a Neo-colonial Context: The Case of Réunion', *Sexual Identities*, pp125-141.

<sup>101</sup> Mintz, S. (1996) 'Enduring Substances, Trying Theories: The Caribbean Region as *Oikoumene*', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2(2): pp. 289-311.

<sup>102</sup> Baptiste, E. (2002). 'Creolisation and the Development of Creole Cultures'. Paper presented at the conference on 'Transformations and Cultural Exchanges in the Indian Ocean Zone' University of Los Angeles, California, April 2002, p 4

<sup>103</sup> See Glissant, E. (1981), Mintz, S. (1985 and 1990) and Smith, M. G. (1965).

<sup>104</sup> See Freyre, G. (1963), Sansone, L. (1997) and D'Corta, G. (1986).

<sup>105</sup> See Adone, D. and I. Plag, ed. (1994) Reverzy, J-F, Manmoutou, J-C. (1990) et F. Vergès, (1999).

slavery. As Nettleford sees it, creolisation is a dynamic process also open to subsequent arrivals, such as the case of Jamaica.<sup>106</sup> This would include the indentured labourers who were living in a similar condition to the slaves according to some historians where one can include the case of Réunion.

For instance, Walter Rodney points out the similarities in the experiences of slaves and indentured labourers in Guyana.<sup>107</sup> Even with the mass arrivals to Guyana of Tamil Indians, Chinese and Muslims from India at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, creolisation continued and is now not only a cultural process but also a social process. After the abolition of slavery, the colonialist power of the Europeans led to new pressures on indentured labourers to become Christians. They could also keep their own religion (Hinduism, Islam or Buddhism), but in order to be integrated they had to learn a Creole language. The indentureship system was similar to slavery. I wish to draw attention not only to similarities of the creolisation process for slaves and indentured labourers, but also to similar processes in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean regions. At the time of slavery, people of many races were forced to leave behind symbolic relics and implements used in their cultural or religious practices. Upon arrival in their new lands, these attempted to reconstruct their native cultures in everyday life by reviving their traditions and practices.

Creolisation is the construction and formation of culture recreated from memories of the motherland and developed around the plantation system and the system of slavery. Furthermore, creolisation was not born on the plantation fields but much earlier, during the storage of slaves in forts such as Gorée Island, in Senegal or

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<sup>106</sup> See Nettleford, R.M. (1978).

<sup>107</sup> See Rodney, W. (1981). *A History of the Guyanese Working people, 1881-1905*. MA: John Hopkins University Press.



Zanzibar, in modern-day Tanzania. People were captured hundreds of kilometres from the sea coast and were kept in these forts for several months until prices had risen sufficiently and enough slaves had been collected for the European buyers. So even before they took the journey of the 'middle passage' on the ships, interactions took place between different ethnic groups. This 'middle passage' took several months before the arrival at the 'final destination'. There was not one single African identity, but a mix of ethnic groups from different Western and Eastern African cultures. These groups then mixed with European cultures during the plantation and slavery period. A complex situation of deracination, socialisation and creolisation was in place in the plantation economies.

Here again the creolisation process is not specific to the Caribbean, because in reality it began before the slaves arrived in the Caribbean. Unlike the Europeans, Tamil Indians, Muslim Indians and Chinese, few Africans in the Caribbean islands can say with certainty which region they come from. The Indian indentured labourers arrived with their religious beliefs, ritual practices, style of dress, traditional food and language largely intact. The preservation of traditions has noteworthy implications on the identity of these people today.

## 2.7 Global cultural creolisation

A further use of the term 'creolisation' that needs brief comment is in relation to the notion of 'hybridity' or 'hybridisation'. Homi Bhabha discusses the notion of 'hybridity'. He describes it as the 'Third Space'.<sup>108</sup> This hybrid space appears in interactions

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<sup>108</sup> Bhabha, H. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. Routledge: London.

between individuals of different cultures. Bhabha describes hybridity as 'a difference 'within' a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality'.<sup>109</sup> Further, 'the interaction of the Third space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning [...] an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code'.<sup>110</sup> I find this to be true in the case and of the indentureship period during colonialism, which was a crucial time in the process of creolisation.

The notion of hybridity came to be fashionable in American and European discourse during the emergence of 'multi-cultural' societies resulting from contemporary migration, which came to the fore in the public sphere in the 1970s. According to Steve Vertovec 'multiculturalism may refer to a demographic description, a broad political ideology, a set of specific public policies, a goal of institutional restructuring, a mode of resourcing cultural expression, a general moral challenge, a set of new political struggles and as a kind of post-modernism'.<sup>111</sup> Vertovec leads us to understand that multiculturalism is

'a real recognition of 'diversity' [which] includes not just easily conceived notions of cultural difference or community belonging, nor of rather more sophisticated ideas surrounding multiple or hybridised identities, but also to diversity of attachments and belongings [...] some of which refer to people, places and traditions outside of the containing limits of nation-state residence'.<sup>112</sup>

This could be taken as an explanation for the beginning of creolisation (see further details in Chapter 3) in Western society or rather the Western megalopolis. Creolisation

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 13

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 37

<sup>111</sup> Vertovec, S. (2001). 'Transnational Challenges to the New Multiculturalism'. Paper presented to the ASA Conference held at the University of Sussex April 2001 in [www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk](http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk) p.3

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 19

can occur in different places with different histories: identity formation alludes to the process whereby people, in social interaction, come to comprehend and extend the social boundaries within which they operate. The reference to a 'boundary' alludes to a *social* space that rarely coincides with a geographical space. Thus diasporic peoples feel part of a home that might be physically many miles away.

Creolisation is at the heart of identity formation but its shape and character are contested and remain to be explored in the following chapters. Are there different understandings of what creolisation entails? Which cultural formations are included in and which excluded from the various understandings? According to Marimoutou, 'creolisation can be understood as transformations as a function of the thought of place, adaptation to the imagined place, in ideology and way of life'.<sup>113</sup> This includes adaptation to the Réunionese literature, theatre and other art forms. The formation of the link also follows this route with transformation of the 'imagined and original myths' where 'the relationships to the link determine the integration-exclusion-transformation dialectic'.<sup>114</sup> Creolisation is therefore part of a constant, creative process of formation and construction in the contact zone. Hannerz claims that

'With regard to the entire cultural inventory of humanity, creolization may involve losing some, but certainly gaining some, too. There is also in the creolization scenario the notion of a more or less open continuum, a gradation of living syntheses, which can be seen to match the cultural distance between center and periphery. And just as it is understood to involve a political economy of language, so the creolization continuum can be seen in its organization of diversity to entail a political economy of culture.'<sup>115</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Marimoutou, J.-C. (2002). 'Le Lieu et Le Lien: A Propos de la littérature réunionnaise' *Hermès, La France et les Outre-Mers. L'Enjeu Multiculturel*. Paris: CNRS Éditions, p. 135. My translation.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 137-138. My translation.

<sup>115</sup> Hannerz, 1992: 127.

The creolisation of the world will proceed in the same sense that Hannerz describes. Creolisation will be continued throughout the world by syntheses of all the major cultures and identities. In some societies, groups of subjects will seek a political agreement in recognition of cultural diversity and plurality, and the recognition of the cultural identity of the Other group.

The globalisation of society and convergence of lifestyles tend to create a diffused universal culture. Glissant believes that 'the idea of creolisation fits in well with the situation in the world. It is the idea of a continuous process capable of producing similarities and differences'.<sup>116</sup> He suggests that there is an analogy between the process of fusion and continual re-differentiation, apparent in creolisation, and the globalisation and cultural interpenetration that now occur in most countries of the world. Globalisation is usually associated with so-called 'Western' civilisation. The processes of 'hybridisation', 'métissage' and 'creolisation' can be contrasted with established notions of 'Westernisation'. Though institutional, technological and legal forms of global civilisation cater especially to the needs of Western individuals, other cultures are increasingly participating in the forms that it takes and are challenging Western perspectives and criteria. Furthermore, the positive view that Westerners have of non-Western attempts to integrate Western models is elucidated by Neil Lazarus's concept of 'reflexive reaction'<sup>117</sup>.

This refers to a hegemonic Westernisation in which local specificities tend to defer to an ideal model of society while money and individualism characterise an individual's economic behaviour. In addition, the distinction between 'global' and 'local' is

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<sup>116</sup> Chanda, T. (2000). 'La 'créolisation' culturelle du monde. Entretien avec Édouard Glissant', *Label France*. My translation.

<sup>117</sup> Lazarus, N. (1999). *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the post-Colonial World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ideologically weighted insofar as 'global' is seen to represent the developed cultures of the West with the rest of the world being regarded as 'local'. At a cultural level, the phenomenon of creolisation is just as evident in Paris as it is in Dakar, or in London as it is in Lagos. Though very little attention has been paid to the phenomena of métissage, syncretism and creolisation in the debate on globalisation, creolisation is not confined to its geographical zone of origin but rather enters what Glissant calls 'the world-space'.

In the final passage of *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy<sup>118</sup> alludes to the 'contact zones' and 'border crossings' through his notion of 'hybridity'. He states that the 'Atlantic Ocean can be considered in itself as a unit of analysis in a transnational and intercultural perspective [...] the terms creolisation and syncretism indicate how cultures, both at an ethnic and political level, have created a new entity that I would be able to name 'the cultures of the Black Atlantic'.<sup>119</sup> Edward Said accurately depicts the brewing of cultures by affirming that the 'oppositions between civilisations are human constructions and identity is the fruit of a 'wish''.<sup>120</sup>

The notion of a 'global-village' implies that the whole world is on the path to creolisation. Glissant sees in the often-violent meeting of peoples and cultures the underlying 'condition' or 'relation' for a new way of being in the world, for an identity that is both rooted in one soil and rich in all soils. This 'relation', the keystone to his conception of modernity, is the complete opposite of the 'cultural and political domination of the Other or a reducing multiculturalism of the diversity'.<sup>121</sup> For Glissant,

<sup>118</sup> Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>120</sup> Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.

<sup>121</sup> Glissant, E. (1998). 'La Créolisation du Monde' in Ruano-Borbalan, J.-C., ed. *L'Identité: Individu, le Groupe, la Société*. Auxerre: Sciences Humaines Éditions, p. 9. My translation.

there are two opposing forms of culture, the 'atavistic' in which creolisation occurred a very long time ago and the 'composite' in which creolisation is happening practically before our eyes. The creolisation that operates on a world scale belongs to the second category. But as Cherubini argues, the question is to see sociocultural creolisation of the intermediary by the territorialisation of the culture in the heterogeneous spaces: urban culture's recomposition spaces, health and interstitial spaces, hybrid territory, counter-culture locations and *entre-lieux* ('meeting-places') of new continual contacts.<sup>122</sup> Having examined global creolisation we shall now return to the case of Réunion. Economic and social developments, most notably the decision to make the island a French Département, have influenced the ways in which creolisation has developed in Réunion.

#### *2.71 On the decreolisation of Creole language and Creole culture?*

With regard to creolisation in Mauritius, Eriksen<sup>123</sup> talks of individualism and claims that creolisation happens only in the black community, which is the only ethnic group on the island whose members are referred to as 'Creoles'. I suggest that collectivism underlies the principles of values and norms in Réunion. In Mauritius, identity became a choice in a liberal democratic context influenced by the economic situation after English colonisation, in the new structure of a nation-state. I would suggest that creolisation and collectivism extend to the African culture in its norms, values and traditions. What is important in identity is the construction of social links, the social integration process and its relationship to domination and power. Identity is transgressive in this case. In a

<sup>122</sup> Cherubini, B. (1999). 'La créolisation socioculturelle à l'heure de la mondialisation: interculturalité, créolités, système monde', *Études Créoles*, vol. XXII, no1, p 121

<sup>123</sup> Eriksen, 1999: 14.

conflict situation one needs to identify the 'Others' and refer to a group, which is a location of security and also constitutes a break from the individual identity.

The difference between multiculturalism in a society like Réunion as opposed to Paris, London or New York, hinges on the fact that the Creole language is a strong symbol of the 'national identity' of Réunion Island and of the former 'migrants'. In the Western megalopolis, the contemporary migrants speak the language of the new country. The danger in Réunion is that the authorities are building a society based on the supposed praise of métissage when this is not the reality in the social classes and in the public and private sphere. Identity in Réunion is defined as neo-colonial identity, as opposed to a post-colonial identity. The post-colonial and former colonial subject in some way seeks to find a new identity and this becomes a nationalism project. The neo-colonial identity is that identity which has a complex of double-sided elements: on the one hand it embraces metropolitan values and norms, and on the other hand it breaks away from and contests the French identity in favour of Réunionese identity. Next, we look at a comparison of Réunion and Mauritius with regard to identity.

**Figure 2.2:** Comparison of identity in Réunion and Mauritius

## IDENTITY

Post-Colonial	Neo-Colonial
<div><b>Mauritius</b>  Race Ethnicity Gender Rational  Individualism</div>	<div><b>Réunion</b>  Values Norms Desire Irrational  Collectivism</div>

Globalisation itself becomes creolised culturally. The constitution of Réunionese society is a logical end to proto-globalisation, which today presents a challenge for the emergence of a viable Creole culture. Combining Robertson's notion of 'glocality'<sup>124</sup> and Glissant's notion of 'creolisation of the world',<sup>125</sup> I here introduce the idea of a 'creobalisation'. This is a term formed by the combination of the terms 'creolisation' and 'globalisation' in a similar way to 'glocality'. Creobalisation is the evolution caused by globalisation, which allows the phenomenon of 'glocality' to take place, and intervene in Réunion or other transcultural places in a context of creolisation.

## 2.8 Contemporary creolisation

Ethnic groups migrating to the islands under colonialism arrived in different local, national and international political and economic conditions. These islands were dominated by Europeans producing merchandise for the European market. The process of creolisation changed according to their time of arrival and degree of integration into the local society. Today, in what I call the global movement, Africans, Indians and Asians are 're-migrants' who move from their native countries to Europe and the USA in search of work. Migration occurs in groups from the same parts of the world as those who migrated under slavery and colonialism. The plantation system no longer exists but a similar process of migration leads to a context where Creolisation continues. As Ulf Hannerz said 'there have been intimations that this world of movement and mixture is a world in creolisation; that a concept of Creole culture with

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<sup>124</sup> See Robertson, R. (1992).

<sup>125</sup> See Glissant, E. (1998).



its congeners may be our most promising root metaphor'.<sup>126</sup> He adds that 'there are now no distinct cultures, only intersystemically connected creolising Culture'.<sup>127</sup>

So creolisation formation is a symbiosis of the genetic mix and cultural mix of several groups. Creolisation formation began with the plantation system under colonial rule in a given social and class space. This can be referred to as social creolisation with its social interactions. I will now go on to distinguish between different kinds of identity and illustrate the importance of social creolisation to identity formation. Creolisation of culture helps to give a social position to the subject. It also involves a personal identity choice in reaction to the influence of the group in which one lives. The social condition in these contexts is similar to the plantation context where people could mix with others of the same social class. Therefore the social form of creolisation is the result of cultural creolisation. I believe that social creolisation, and cultural creolisation as we have seen can also emerge outside of the context of the plantation system and are certainly not restricted to the Caribbean islands. The process can occur in places as diverse as townships, council residences, suburbs of big cities, port cities and 'zones of transition'. Thomas Eriksen examined the case of Mauritius and has argued that creolisation is possible wherever impurity is present. Mixing of values, norms and ways of life occurs where a society is open to inclusion of any other communities and to individualism.<sup>128</sup>

The following figure is based on the work of Eriksen<sup>129</sup> regarding dimensions in discourses of culture. He contrasts creolisation with ethnic nationalism and

<sup>126</sup> Hannerz, U. (1987). 'The World in Creolization', *Africa*, 57 (4), p 551

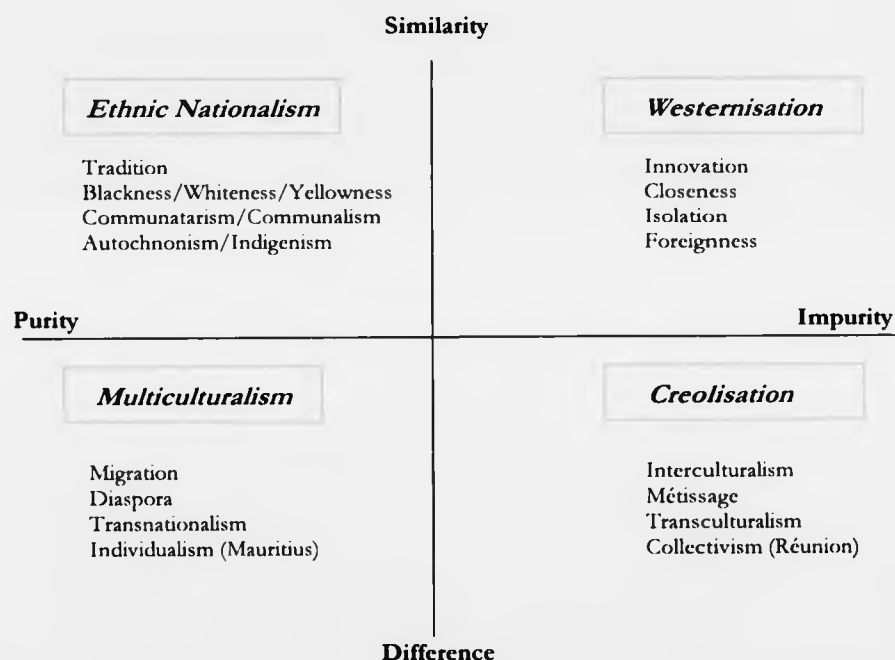
<sup>127</sup> Hannerz, 1987: 551.

<sup>128</sup> Eriksen, 1999: 13.

<sup>129</sup> See Eriksen, T. (1999).

Westernisation with multiculturalism. I have added other relevant concepts to the figure. I have based my work on concepts presented in this table, transferred to the context of the South-Western Indian Ocean.

**Figure 2.3:** Discourses on cultures



Nowadays to understand societies throughout the world, one needs to understand the concept of the Creole society. Creolisation is in some cases described as a tradition. This is not an accurate description, as creolisation is not a finished product but is still in the process of change. To understand Creole society as a standard culture leads to a 'decreolisation' of the Creole culture, for instance in the regions cited earlier. Creole culture is not fixed and fossilized rather creolisation is a process that continues. Eriksen

argues that one cannot talk of cultural decreolisation since 'standard culture' makes no empirical sense.<sup>130</sup> However one can talk of a 'social decreolisation'. 'Social decreolisation' would mean the passage to a superior social class. According to my fieldwork survey (see also Chapter 3.81 on the social stratification of Réunionese society and the questionnaire), creolisation occurs at the 'bottom' of society, in the lower and working class and some sections of the middle class (described as transculturation). Reaching the 'top' of society, the upper-class, would involve the deformation of creolisation (described as liberal multiculturation) i.e decreolisation.

## 2.9 Conclusion

What conclusion can be drawn from all of this? There is a tenuous link between the labels one assigns to people and whether these labels accurately portray them. Immigrants to a new country (or former slaves or indentured labourers) are dependent upon having control over their identities. Many lose their original identities due to oppressive labeling. Understanding that one has to work within the context of being given a label, while recognizing that labels don't have to define you, is essential. Moreover, some people see their collective identities as significant. Social identity construction involves prejudice. I believe that it may occasionally have to do with an oppressed group's struggle for justice. The identity formation of this group varied according to their position in society controlled by the power of the State, manifest in public discourse of the State. Let us be clear that cultural expressions and practices are a form of representation. Hall recognizes identity as 'a matter of 'becoming' as well as

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 13

'being'.<sup>131</sup> What is more, identities result from history and are subject to regular transformation. Identity is versatile, evolving and experienced in relation to communication with the Other. The existence of the Other group is particularly important in the formation of cultural identity. It is through contact with the Other group that a subject becomes conscious of its own ethnic identity.

In Réunion, the periods of slavery and colonialism were very important in the process of identity formation. The Creole language also played a very important role in the process. Social identity involves far more than the native country from which one originates: racial associations, language associations or sexual orientation. At an individual level the subject makes choices in defining itself, which have a stronger impact than a group definition. Espelencia Baptiste claims that 'we can fully apprehend the intersections of the local and global processes in the colonial enterprise and the formation of contemporary geo-political configurations'.<sup>132</sup> The creolisation concept evident in these island cultures may also help us to understand the contemporary creolisation process. The society formed in Réunion was itself an outcome of 'early' or 'proto' globalisation. (Explorers, colonists, missionaries, venture capitalists and international migrants often traversed these islands with the creation of seaport cultures and trading stations and entrepôts). There would have been no society in Réunion, Mauritius, Jamaica or Trinidad without some form of globalisation. The current phase of globalisation led by the transnationalism of capital and the further and deeper flow of goods, commodities, images and people have profoundly affected contemporary places. Present-day globalisation presents a challenge both to the emergence of a viable

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<sup>131</sup> See Hall, S. (1989 and 1996).

<sup>132</sup> Baptiste, 2002: 10.

creolised culture and to the 'identity resolution' promoted by their metropolises. To understand creolisation one needs to understand the larger context of contemporary and historical global exchanges as well as the colonial venture.

In sum, creolisation started as a linguistic term, and then extended to become an anthropological and sociological concept. It may also be appropriate in other disciplines. It seems to have particular resonance in the 'New World' but this is not confirmed. The concept of creolisation can now be used as a paradigm in social scientific research.

## CHAPTER III

### The Formation and Construction of a Cultural and Social Identity

#### 3.1 Introduction

To understand the term 'identity', several elements need to be taken into consideration: language, sociocultural factors and political and economic structures. How do these translate into real life experience? 'Identity' is a concept which covers all fields of life and is expressed in different ways: through language, art, literature, style of clothing, culinary habits or religion. The question of identity is a universal phenomenon which comes to the fore in times of crisis or conflict. Réunion is currently in a state of identity crisis and conflict, derived from its mix of inhabitants of French, Creole and native backgrounds.

In this chapter, the primary focus will be the sociolinguistic aspect of identity, especially with respect to the formation of the Creole language in Réunion. This will allow us to understand the formation of Creole culture and consequently the formation of Creole identity. Our analysis will be based on, and compared with, the work of Robert Chaudenson, a prominent French sociolinguist who worked in Réunion for thirty years.<sup>133</sup> During the 1970s, Chaudenson was the only sociolinguist to work on the formation of Creole languages and cultures in Réunion. The main finding of

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<sup>133</sup> Chaudenson, R. (1992). *Des îles, des hommes, des langues (langues Créoles, cultures Créoles)*. Paris: L'Harmattan. Robert Chaudenson is now Director of the Institute des Etudes Créoles at the University of Aix-Marseille. He is the key scholar of the origin of Réunionese Creole languages and culture (1974, 1979, and 1989). He conducted a study of Réunion from the mid 1960s until the mid 1980s. Many references are made to his work by scholars such as Carayol (1978, 1985), Harat (1977, 1980) Beniamino (1992, 1995) and Benoit (1983).

Chaudenson was the fundamental role of language 'in the social evolution and formation of most [...] cultural systems'.<sup>134</sup> He argues later that he aimed to demonstrate that 'for the study of all forms of creolisation one absolutely needs to take into account socio-historical factors. Language is one of the cultural systems which strongly manifests the centripetal attraction of the dominant cultural model'.<sup>135</sup>

The current situation of Réunionese society merits closer examination. Our concern here is with the interaction between language, cultural identity and social factors in a specific context. It is important to consider the sociohistorical conditions at the time of the first settlements in Réunion in order to understand the existing social structures. I will consider social interactions with regard to ethnicity, nationalism, identity and language loyalty relative to diasporic migration.

### 3.2 The sociohistorical study of Creole language and culture

The formation of the Creole language took place during the period from 1675 to 1730, when similar sociohistorical conditions existed in French colonial societies, especially in the case of island colonies. These colonies were structured around a plantation system of slavery. In the case of Réunion, Robert Chaudenson talks of a kind of 'contact zone' responsible for the formation of the Creole language. According to Chaudenson, the Réunionese Creole language is born from language contact in an insular situation through a process that can be broken down into three phases. First, the 'Habitation Phase': a form of social organisation where the basic economic activity is farming, and

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<sup>134</sup> Chaudenson, 1992: 279. My translation.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.280-281. My translation.

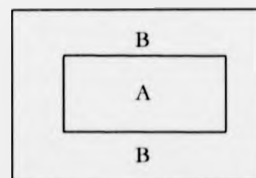
involves small colonial European and non-European communities. Second, the 'Plantation Phase' and finally the 'Indentureship Phase'.

Chaudenson sees a meeting between the 'Place' and the 'Link' (concepts introduced by Marimoutou<sup>136</sup>) as time-specific. In the case of Réunion, the Place is a 'deserted space where we forget the original land [except the one of the master], space as founder place'.<sup>137</sup> The Link is 'the enslavement link, a human is turned into an object/merchandise, i.e. the slave, their humanity is denied by slavery'.<sup>138</sup> Chaudenson (1992) provides a convincing analysis of the sociohistorical interaction between Europeans and slaves as illustrated below.<sup>139</sup>

**Figure 3.1:** Phase 1

**Phase 1 (Habitation)**

(1665-1715)



The formation of Creole languages began the habitation society made up of homesteads established between 1665 and 1715. The Europeans (masters) are represented by box **A**; The Malgache and the Goanese (slaves) by box **B**.

**A** represents the reference model and dominant culture: the white French and European colonists. Chaudenson claims that a regional variety of French was spoken by the first

<sup>136</sup> Marimoutou, J.-C. (2002). 'Le Lacu et le Laen: A Propos de La Littérature Réunionnaise', *Hermès: La France et Les Outre-Mers*. L'Enjeu Multiculturel.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132. My translation.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132. My translation.

<sup>139</sup> Figure from Chaudenson, 1992: 119.



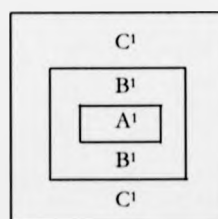
colonists coming from the Vendée, Brittany and Normandy. Chaudenson adds that the language of **A** was the target language for the slaves and 1715 to 1725 was the crucial period for the emergence of this language.

**B** represents the versions of French spoken by the slaves. This language was formed by an interaction between **A** and **B**.

**Figure 3.2: Phase 2**

Phase 2<sup>140</sup> is represented as follows:

**Phase 2 (Plantation)**  
(1715-1848)



The second phase, the plantation society was marked by coffee production (1715 to 1790) and sugar cane production (1790 to 1848). This period saw the massive arrival of slaves. According to Chaudenson,

**A¹**: represents the target-language as in figure 3.1 above. (ie 'A', the language brought by French settlers).

**B¹**: again represents the versions of French spoken by the servants, slaves and overseers.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Figure from Chaudenson, 1992: 119.

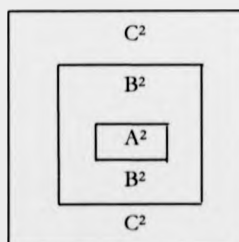
**C'** : represents slaves speaking versions of French based on **B'**, i.e. the target language for **C'** was **B'** rather than **A'**.

According to some historians,<sup>142</sup> there were few overseers during the coffee plantation period (1715 to 1790), with an increased number during the sugar cane plantation period (1790 to 1848). Nevertheless, the target language **A'** at the time was already different to **A**. The variety of French was influenced by varieties spoken by colonists from different regions of France, as well as changes in the French spoken in the Metropolitan mainland. Creole language varieties also developed in groups **B'** and **C'**, especially with the mass arrival of slaves. The Afro-Malgache languages had a very strong influence on the Creole language.

Phase 3 is depicted below.

**Figure 3.3: Phase 3.**

**Phase 3 (Indentureship)**  
(1848-1946)



<sup>141</sup> The overseer's task was to survey the work of the slaves as a plantation manager. They were hated by the slaves and were usually Métis in origin. See also the work of Gerbeau, H. (1970). *Les esclaves noirs: Pour une histoire du silence*. Paris: Balland

<sup>142</sup> See the work of Fuma, S. (1992, 1998) Eve, P. (1992), Gerbeau, H. (1970, 1982, 1998) and Vaxellaire, D. (1999)

The third and final phase identified by Chaudenson was an 'Indentureship Phase' initiated by the arrival of indentured labourers from India and Africa.<sup>143</sup>

Here  $C^2$  represents the indentured labourers at the same level as the slaves in Phase 2. ( $C^1$  in previous diagram).

$A^2$  and  $B^2$  represent the same groups as in the previous diagrams (labelled  $A$  and  $A^1$ ,  $B$  and  $B^1$  respectively). Officially, masters no longer existed with the end of slavery in 1848, but similar work relations still existed in sugar cane plantations run by the former masters.

### 3.21 *The current evolution of Creole language*

Chaudenson did not continue his analysis to a fourth phase of Creole language formation. This phase seems to stem from the influence of Western consumer society. With Départementalisation in 1946 and the policy effected in the 1960s by Michel Debré, Réunion reinforced a strong connection to Paris in terms of education, administration and communication. The Creole language was greatly influenced by French.

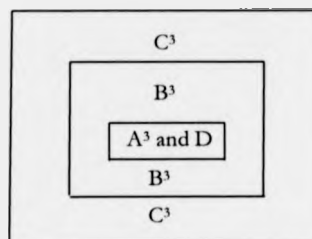
Today, the Creole language is still in the process of changing. It has progressed into a new phase. The following diagram in the spirit of Chaudenson's work could represent this current phase.

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<sup>143</sup> Indentured labourers originating from Madagascar, Comoros or elsewhere in Africa were considered 'Africans'. Indentured labourers originating from Malaysia and China were considered 'Chinese'. Those from Gujarat were considered 'Arab'. While those from South-India were considered 'Malhar'.

Figure 3.4: Phase 4

Phase 4 (Départementalisation)  
(1946-2003)



In this scheme:

**A<sup>3</sup>** represents the ex-colonists, ex-masters and Réunionese upper-class.

**B<sup>3</sup>** represents the middle-class of descendants of all ethnic groups.

**C<sup>3</sup>** represents the working class and lower class, the unemployed, former indentured labourers, former slaves and former colonists who became known as Petit Blanc.

**D** represents the metropolitan French. The language spoken by **D** is the target language represented by the Zorey during Départementalisation. **D** especially influences the language of **C<sup>3</sup>** due to political and cultural impositions of the French government during Départementalisation. I will argue for the construction of a distinct identity through the imposition of the French language.

In phase 4, **A<sup>3</sup>** and **D** do not speak Creole and represent those in the public sphere: administration, education, media and the French culture in general. Those in category **C<sup>3</sup>** always speak Creole in the private sphere. Finally, **B<sup>3</sup>** are the middle class undergoing a language and cultural decreolisation process. Figure 3.4 above presents a new phase of Réunionese society becoming closer to Western culture. The lower classes, however,

retain the Creole language despite the devalorising of Creole during the Habitation and Plantation phases particularly in the private sphere.<sup>144</sup> The media are represented in the scheme in positions A<sup>3</sup> and D and promote the language of the metropolitan French. This had a major influence on the young generation in the 1980s.

Karin Speedy<sup>145</sup> and Jacques Arends<sup>146</sup> point out an alternative with the theory of Phillip Baker<sup>147</sup> on Events hypothesis. Baker was the first to illustrate the significance of demographic factors for creolisation. For Arends, Baker initiated the term Event 1, referring to the point in time when numerical parity between the black and white parts of the population is attained. It is hypothesized that in the phase between the commencement of colonization and Event 1, when growing numbers of slaves are introduced whilst the number of whites does not raise in proportion to these, it becomes ever more complicated for L2 learners to gain contact to native speakers to learn the language from. Though differential contact must certainly have had a linguistic impact, at the moment not sufficient is recognized about it to identify this in any aspects.

Another important demographic event, distinguished by Baker according to Arends, is Event 2, which refers to the point in time when the number of locally born blacks, or Creoles, reaches numerical parity with the whole number of whites. Event 2 may be understood as the point in time at which the black population has creolized or native

<sup>144</sup> The loss of African languages during slavery and colonialism was a complex process. Sociolinguists offer no conclusive theories on this loss.

<sup>145</sup> Speedy, K. (1995). 'Mississippi and Teche Creole: Two Separate Starting Points for Creole in Louisiana', in Baker, P., ed. *From Contact to Creole and Beyond*. London: University of Westminster Press, pp. 97-111.

<sup>146</sup> Arends, J. (1995). 'The Socio-Historical Background of Creoles', in Arends, J., Muysken, P., and N. Smith, eds. *Pidgins and Creoles. An Introduction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co, pp. 15-24.

<sup>147</sup> Baker, P. (1982). On the origins of the first Mauritian and of the Creole language of their descendants. A refutation of Chaudenson's 'Bourbonnais' theory, in Baker, P. and C. Corne, *Isle de France Creole. Affinities and Origins*. Ann Arbor: Karoma, pp. 131-259.

See also Baker, P. (1984). 'Agglutinated French articles in Creole French: Their evolutionary significance'. *Ti Reo* 27: 89-129.

black population has acquired the 'critical mass' essential for creolisation to take place. This does not mean that creolisation has to take place, only that a situation for it is completed. Whether creolisation will actually happen depends on other demographic issue, such as the rate of post-Event 2 slave imports and demographic developments within the white population.

Added to that the hypothesis of Baker according to Speedy predicts that a homogeneous Creole language will not appear unless foreign-born slaves continue to be imported in considerable numbers for some years following Event 2. If this does not happen then the continuum of speech forms, which emerges between Events 1 and 2, will not be broken, resulting in the type of linguistic continuum which survives in Réunion today.

### 3.22 *Languages and cultural interaction*

During the indentureship period, the Indian labourers worked as technicians in the workshops and sugar cane factories, while the African labourers toiled in the sugar cane fields. The Indians were in contact with the white technicians and also with the Africans who brought the sugar-cane to the factories.<sup>148</sup> In the evening they lived in the same areas where it can be supposed that cross-cultural exchanges began to take place. The formation of Réunionese identity started with the first settlements on the island, notably in the evolution of language. The colonists spoke a regional French from Brittany and Normandy.<sup>149</sup> The society consisted of a mix of Breton and Norman cultures with

<sup>148</sup> In Mauritius, West Indies, Fiji or South Africa Indians were also employed chiefly as labourers in the sugar cane fields. See the work of Rodney, W. (1981). *A History of the Guyanese Working people. 1881-1905*. MA: John Hopkins University Press. See also Tinker, H. (1974). *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian labour overseas. 1830-1920*. London: Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations.

<sup>149</sup> Different from the Company of India run by people from Paris.

admixtures of Malgache and Goanese cultures. Added to these were African, Irish and Dutch people who came to Réunion between 1663 and 1700.<sup>150</sup> At the same time the original cultures of the first slaves who escaped to the Highlands from the plantations (known as Maroons) was reproduced. The establishment of the *Code Noir* in 1685 based on mainland European policy, ensured the official prohibition of contact with white people. Over the period 1663 to 1730, a Creole language developed and was spoken by the slaves amongst themselves. This came about due to the fact that they came from different linguistic backgrounds in Africa and Madagascar and could not otherwise communicate.

The important role of women during this period should be noted. According to historians,<sup>151</sup> Malgache and Goanese women were the wives, concubines and mistresses of the French colonists. The mixed children resulting from these relationships served as a link between the different cultures of their parents. This suggests that Chaudenson over-estimated the role of B<sup>2</sup> in Phase 3.

C<sup>2</sup> would appear to be close to A<sup>2</sup>. The role of slave women involved activities such as in housekeeping and nursing was important in the formation of the Creole languages.<sup>152</sup> The children of slaves interacted with both mixed children and white children in the houses of the masters. They used Creole language to communicate with their husbands and their own children as well as the children of their masters. Women and children clearly played an important role in the formation of language and identity, and therefore in the process of creolisation.

<sup>150</sup> See Vaxellaire, D. (1999). *Le Grand Livre de l'Histoire de La Réunion. Vol. 2. De 1848 à l'an 2000*. C.E.F.: Orphic.

<sup>151</sup> Such as Fuma, S. (1994, 1998). Combeau, Y. (2002). Vaxellaire, D. (1999).

<sup>152</sup> At any rate their version of 'French' would have been closer to A/A'/A<sup>2</sup> than was that of the plantation slave workers. Linguists speak of a continuum between these varieties.

Chaudenson believes that the Réunionese Creole language took its definitive form around the period from 1715 to 1720.<sup>153</sup> By contrast, Armand and Chopinet<sup>154</sup> argue that 'more than a half-century would have been necessary to enable the French, Malgache, Africans, Indians and Goanese Métis who settled in Bourbon<sup>155</sup> to construct this 'creyole language'.<sup>156</sup> This brings us to the question of how the various languages and cultures of Réunion were formed. One way of understanding this issue is to examine the cases of Cuba and St-Domingue (The Eastern part of Hispaniola, currently called Dominican Republic).<sup>157</sup>

### 3.3 Comparing Indian Ocean and Caribbean language formations

St-Domingue in 1789 was home to 15,000 slaves (8,500 emancipated) and 30,000 whites. By comparison Cuba in 1792 had: 76,180 black slaves (31,000 emancipated) and 96,440 whites.<sup>158</sup> Chaudenson<sup>159</sup> asserts that the absence of Creole forms in a prolonged period (over two centuries) of Habitation society (Phase 1) occurred mainly due to a larger population of white people than black people. Unlike the French and English, the Spanish based their colonisation on the Hispanization of the autochthonous and slave populations. For instance, in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, they established twenty-three universities<sup>160</sup> in the West Indies and Latin America.<sup>161</sup> In the case of Réunion, there were more slaves than white masters and certainly no education system: not a single

<sup>153</sup> Chaudenson, 1992: 56.

<sup>154</sup> Armand, A. et G. Chopinet, (1983). *La littérature Réunionnaise d'expression créole (1828-1982)*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

<sup>155</sup> The former name of Réunion.

<sup>156</sup> Armand et Chopinet, 1983: 20. My translation.

<sup>157</sup> Chaudenson explains the non-presence of Creole languages in the former Spanish colonies in comparison to the case of Réunion.

Chaudenson, 1992: pp.124-130 and pp.282-284.

<sup>158</sup> See the work of D'Ans, A. (1987). Corten, A. (1989). Dipp, H. (1982). Feronville, R. (1988), Lapski, J. (1986, 1994).

<sup>159</sup> Chaudenson, 1992: 128.

<sup>160</sup> At the time of this thesis progress I could not get any information regarding primary school education in these areas.

<sup>161</sup> See Benitez-Rojo, A. (1992). *The Repeating Island* Duke: Duke University.



school was established.<sup>162</sup> The majority of whites in Réunion during the period of slavery and colonialism were illiterate.<sup>163</sup> Today the majority of Petit Blanc, the poor whites, speak Creole. The distinction between 'Gros Blanc' and 'Petit Blanc' came about around 1838 and after the abolition of slavery 'Petit Blanc' became 'Petit Blanc des Hauts' (or 'small whites of the highlands') when they moved into the Highlands. The first 'poor whites' appeared as early as 1725 to 1730. Their numbers increased significantly from 1800 to 1810 (during the coffee crisis) and again in 1865 (during the sugar-cane crisis). It is noteworthy that the existence of poor whites is unique to Réunion. In most former European colonies the majority of the white population form part of the upper, dominant class. Exceptions existed in South Africa, where arguably a 'Creole language' known as Afrikaans emerged, as well as in the case of the 'Red legs' of Barbados.

Chaudenson also compares the situations of Cuba and Mauritius from 1490 to 1890. At the time 430,000 African immigrants arrived in Cuba. In 1862, 80% of the population was black, half of them were emancipated and half enslaved.<sup>164</sup> As a result, no Spanish Creole developed. The ratio of emancipated blacks (who spoke a version of Spanish rather than a Creole) to enslaved blacks was favourable towards the learning of Spanish as a second language by the newly arrived slaves (rather than the creation of a Creole). In the case of Mauritius, after the abolition of slavery between 1834 and 1912, 453,063 Indian indentured labourers migrated to the island,<sup>165</sup> forming two thirds of the population. This did not affect the Creole language in Mauritius, i.e. the Indian

<sup>162</sup> The University of Réunion and the Academy of Réunion was established in 1982. Before all affairs were conducted by the Aix-Marseille Academy in Metropolitan France.

<sup>163</sup> See Vaxellere, D. (1999), Fuma, S. (1992) and *Revue of Centre Géographique de Bourbon* (1999 and 2000).

<sup>164</sup> For further details on Spanish colonization see the works of Benítez-Rojo, A. (1992). *The Repeating Island* Duke. Duke University.

<sup>165</sup> See Cohen, R. (1997).

labourers learnt the already existing Creole (initially as a second language). I note that on the abolition day there were 61,045 black slaves and 29,000 whites.

Chaudenson concludes that 'when such major immigration occurs in an era where the medium of communication is stable and used by all the local population, it does not produce significant changes in the structure of this language, even if they are numerically important'.<sup>166</sup> A similar major immigration occurred in Réunion at the same time. The role of Indian languages and their influence on the Creole language needs to be considered.<sup>167</sup> Mauritius was under British rule and had a segmentary creolisation of language and culture.<sup>168</sup> In Réunion, on the other hand, under French rule, Indians were obliged to learn French for use instead of their native languages.<sup>169</sup> Living and working with emancipated slaves, they learnt to speak the Creole language as well, in order to communicate amongst themselves, due to the fact that no lingua franca was available for use between the two groups. This led to a synthetic creolisation. (A similar phenomenon took place with regard to religion: many Hindus converted to Christianity). This is not the case in Mauritius where all Indians speak one or two of their native Indian languages.<sup>170</sup> Religion and style of clothing have also remained stable. In Réunion, Indian languages have been eradicated. No descendant of Indian indentured labourers today can speak their parents' native languages. They dress in European style and the Kaf sometimes embrace two or three religions.<sup>171</sup> This is also

<sup>166</sup> Chaudenson, 1992: 126. My translation.

<sup>167</sup> See also Barot, C. (1990) 'Classification et Typification dans un Contexte Multiculturel', in Reverzy, J.-F. et J.-C. Manmoutou, eds. *L'Espoir Transculturel*, Tome II 'Iles et Fables'. Paris: L'Harmattan.

<sup>168</sup> See Média, L. (2002) 'Creolisation and Globalisation in a Neo-Colonial Context: the Case of La Réunion' *Social Identities*, Vol. 8, n°1, pp.125-141, p. 127. See also the difference between segmentary and synthetic creolisation in chapter 2.64.

<sup>169</sup> They would need to learn for different purposes also. I assume with their smaller numbers it was difficult for them to maintain their Indian languages.

<sup>170</sup> Hindi, Urdu and Bhojpuri and also some Tamil and Bengali.

<sup>171</sup> In the 1980s, Indian priests from Réunion went to Mauritius to seek the pure religion and brought it to Réunion. Even today some Indian priests go for training in Mauritius!

true of Chinese, Muslims, the 'new' African indentured labourers, ex-slaves, Indian indentured labourers and whites.<sup>172</sup>

We have seen three separate cases of language formation in St-Domingue/Cuba (a Spanish colony), Mauritius (a British colony) and Réunion (a French colony), with three different outcomes. It can also be seen that the process of cultural creolisation was different on these islands. Although relevant, the population balance between whites and blacks was not decisive. A more important factor was the political will of the colonising power in imposing laws to varying degrees on the population at large. However, children (who are language learners par excellence) have a habit of ignoring (or being relatively immune) to political legal constraints in making friends. I conclude that it is the particular type of colonialism which influences the patterns of linguistic, cultural and social creolisation.

### 3.31 *Ethnic group development and exchanges*

A comparison of the British and French colonies reveals some interesting differences in the reproduction of labourers of Indian ethnic origins. There were no Indian indentured labourers in Spanish colonies as the supply was controlled by British labour recruiters.

The table below is taken from Cohen's (1997) chapter on 'Global Diasporas'<sup>173</sup> and shows the Indian population Diaspora in the world including those who are and are not indentured descents.

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<sup>172</sup> Franco-Mauritians embraced the French culture to such an extent that Michel Debré issued all Franco-Mauritians with French passports in the 1970s.

<sup>173</sup> These numbers are official, in contrast to those of slaves whose exact places of origin in Africa are uncertain.

**Table 3.1** Indentured Indian workers and Indian Population, 1980.

Colony/Country	Period	Indentured Workers	Indian pop. 1980
1 Natal (South Africa)	1860-1911	152,184	750,000
2 Mauritius	1834-1912	453,063	623,000
3 British Guyana	1838-1917	238,909	424,400
4 Trinidad	1845-1917	143,939	421,000
5 Fiji	1879-1916	60,969	300,700
6 Réunion	1829-1924	118,000	125,000
7 Dutch Guyana / Suriname	1873-1916	34,000	124,900
8 Kenya & Uganda	1895-1901	39,771	79,000
9 Jamaica	1854-1885	36,420	50,300
10 Guadeloupe	1854-1885	42,326	23,165
11 Martinique	1854-1889	25,509	16,450
12 St Vincent	1861-1880	2,472	5,000
13 Grenada	1856-1885	3,200	3,900
14 St Lucia	1858-1895	4,350	3,700
15 Seychelles	1899-1916	6,319	n.a.
Total		1,361,431	2,952,495

Source: Clarke et al. (1990: 9) cited in Cohen, R. (1997) *Global Diasporas*. London: UCL Press.

Table 3.1 is arranged in descending order of the number of Indians in each of the former colonies in 1980. Table 3.2 below shows the evolution of these figures from the indentureship period to 1980.

**Table 3.2:** Evolution of Indentured Indian workers (From table 3.1).

Colony/Country	Numbers	Percentage
1 Fiji	+ 239,731	+ 393.20
2 Natal (South Africa)	+ 597,816	+ 392.82
3 Dutch Guyana / Suriname	+ 90,900	+ 267.35
4 Trinidad	+ 277,061	+ 192.48
5 St Vincent	+ 2,528	+ 100.26
6 Kenya & Uganda	+ 39,229	+ 98.63
7 British Guyana	+ 185,491	+ 77.64
8 Jamaica	+ 13,880	+ 38.11
9 Mauritius	+ 169,937	+ 37.50
10 Grenada	+ 700	+ 21.87
11 Réunion	+ 7,000	+ 5.93
12 St Lucia	- 650	- 14.94
13 Martinique	- 9,059	- 35.51
14 Guadeloupe	- 19,161	- 45.36
15 Seychelles	n.a.	n.a.
Total	+ 1,591,064	+ 116.86

Table 3.2 shows that the respective political intention of the French and English colonising powers had a different effect on the retention of Indian identity and thus the formation of creolisation. It can also be seen from this table that the French Départements<sup>174</sup> fail to 'reproduce' those who continue to call themselves 'Indians'. St-Lucia was a French colony from 1659 to 1814 and a British colony from 1814 to the independence in 1979.<sup>175</sup> The official language, education and media are in the English language though people speak a Creole based on the French language of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The island of St Lucia, located between Martinique and Guadeloupe, does not have the same language system as either of these regions. Mauritius was a French colony from 1710 to 1814 and a British colony from 1814 until independence in 1968. Mauritius had a very strong white community based on French values and norms, but the Mauritian people continue to speak Creole based on the French language.<sup>176</sup> It would appear that more mixing occurred in the French colonies than in the British colonies despite the transfer of the Indian people. It may be the case that colonisation was more intense in French colonies than English colonies. Indian labourers may have had trouble mixing with other ethnic groups since the traditional caste system in India is resistant to change.

My argument is essentially that in some environments the population remained distinct and therefore their cultures and identities resisted change. In other places the cultural identities were subordinated and sometimes eliminated due to endogamy and other factors. Emigration and immigration are possible reasons for the increase and

<sup>174</sup> Réunion, Martinique and Guadeloupe.

<sup>175</sup> See Wilson, S. (1999). *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*. IJ. UPE. See also the works of Glissant, E. (1981).

<sup>176</sup> See Sebba, M. (1997). *Contact Languages: Pidgins and Creoles*. Palgrave: Macmillan and See also Baker, P. (1972) *Kreol - A Description of Mauritian Creole*. London: Hurst.

decrease in Indian populations, as given in my second argument. The return of Indian indentured labourers to India after the end of their contract occurred more often in some colonies than in others. For example, more Indians left Guyana than Trinidad.<sup>177</sup> In the case of another prosperous country, South Africa, the discovery of gold and diamonds, the growth of a port city and the growth of the sugar-cane industry based in Natal produced another wave of free immigrants. They were not necessarily indentured labourers but also Indian merchants or traders who arrived later. I have looked at the various stages of emigration and they are not sufficient to explain the very large discrepancies as illustrated on the table.

In Réunion, although freed from the oppression of the original masters, the indentured labourers were submitted to conditions similar to those obtaining under slavery. Nevertheless, the colonial power justified this restriction of their freedom based on moral, humanitarian and especially economic motives. The system of indentureship was in fact a masked operation of the slave trade. The recruitment of these migrants although freed from the previous system of purchase, still occurred in an atmosphere of terror and violence reminiscent of the slave trade.<sup>178</sup> All these elements together constitute a moral and physical violence.

An international commission conducted British experts in 1877 showed the servile situation of the population with Indian background in Réunion. The results of this investigation led England to prohibit Indian emigration to French colonies in 1882.<sup>179</sup> This may be one of the reasons for the discontinuation of Indian population in French colonies. It also shows the continued violence by French colonists directed against

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<sup>177</sup> See Rodney, W. (1981). *A History of the Guyanese Working people, 1881-1905*. MA: John Hopkins University Press.

<sup>178</sup> See Cierbeau, II. (1982).

<sup>179</sup> Furma, S. (1998); Cierbeau, II. (1982).

migrants even after the abolition of slavery. Slaves, ex-slaves and indentured labourers who remained were obliged to adopt the French culture, language and way of life. This is a second possible reason for the low growth of Indian populations in these colonies. Today in the former colonies near the Indian Ocean, for instance in South Africa (+392.8% for Indians), the population reproduces the same ethnic backgrounds and there is no 'social intercourse' between different ethnic groups. In Mauritius (+37.5%) there is a reproduction of the same ethnic backgrounds but to a much lesser extent, indicating that some mixing between different ethnic groups occurred. Communication occurs between different ethnic groups but marriage across ethnocultural lines is rare. In Réunion (+5.9%) there is little increase of Indian population numbers. This indicates that the Indians frequently mixed with other communities and occurs in the lower and middle classes. In summary, we can say that today the reproduction of the original languages and cultures occurs in the former British colonies and not in the former French colonies.

### *3.32 Creole language and metropolitanisation*

Returning to Chaudenson's argument, it is probable that Réunion and later Mauritius and the French West Indies would never have seen the formation of Creole languages had the period of habitation society been prolonged. Ultimately, a regional version of French would have developed.

It can be noted that there is little Spanish culture left in Cuba, Saint-Domingue or Latin America: the Spanish language is the only remnant. However, of the other cultural references nothing remains. One must remember that there was a struggle for

independence in these areas. For example, strong campaigns were waged against the Spanish in Cuba with the help of Americans. Political hegemony promoted the rise of the local bourgeoisie and liberators. They used this opportunity to reject Spanish influence and spread nationalism.

There would therefore have been an imposition of a European language and culture similar to the influence imposed by the creation of a French Département in the 'Habitation' phase (Phase 4). There is a strong possibility that some ethnic languages were in use throughout colonialism, spoken by new immigrants and understood by their children in the private sphere. The exception is the period from around 1946 to the mid- 1990s when cultural militants started to learn what they termed their 'ancestral languages' such as Mandarin, Cantonese, Hindi, Urdu or Malgache and also tried to establish these languages at schools.<sup>180</sup> Today, only new immigrants commonly speak their native languages such as Comorians, Malgache or Shimaoré languages.

A historical comparison of the Creole languages of Seychelles, Mauritius, Haiti, St-Lucia and Dominican Republic reveals great similarities between them. All were under French colonial rule. However, around 1800, after the Revolution in Haiti and the war lost against the British, France relinquished these islands to the British.<sup>181</sup> However, the Creole language spoken in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries is clearly structurally similar to the Creole spoken in these islands today according to travel records from that time. At that time, the language was referred to as *patois* spoken by slaves. However, it was already a structurally language complex used by the sugar and coffee labourers. I believe that Creole in Réunion was similar to that of the other islands from the 'crucial period' of

<sup>180</sup> An Institut Linguistique Anthropologique was formed at the University of Réunion three years ago. Most of Réunion's ancestral languages can be studied, however African languages are excluded.

<sup>181</sup> Réunion itself was a British colony between 1810 and 1815.



Chaudenson (1715 to 1725) to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with the mass arrival of new French colonists, the presence of the British for five years and the arrival of the indentured workers. With the beginning of globalized schooling from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century a process of decreolisation and 'Frenchization' began.

Decreolisation is related to the strength of French influence, a process I also call 'metropolitanisation'. Language is not fixed, but fluid and the process of change continues today: just as society develops and is changing to an increasingly Western-American society. This is the beginning of a transition phase of the language and people in Réunion known as a post-Creole continuum. In some cases, as Suzanne Romaine notes with regard to Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea,<sup>182</sup> 'the post-Creole continuum exists in the urban areas'.<sup>183</sup> Salikoko Mufwene<sup>184</sup> explains how decreolisation occurs on some islands depopulated by migrations to the city, a process he claims has been made possible by socio-economic mobility. A glance at some other cases in Réunion shows that in the populated regions, Creole still has a strong presence.

### 3.4 African Creole language and French Creole language

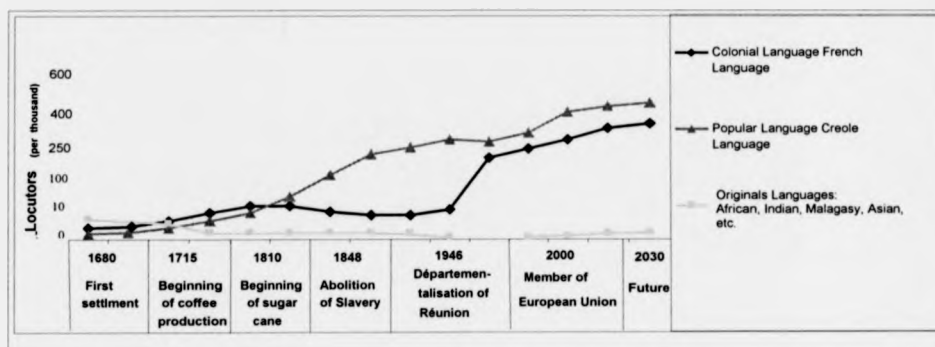
Chaudenson argued that the period between 1715 and 1725 was crucial to his Habitation system. I would suggest that 1800 to 1815, 1860 to 1880 and 1980 to 2000 were similarly crucial to the formation of Creole languages and culture in Réunion. I propose, drawing from a number of sources, to represent the evolution of languages in Réunion in the following scheme.

<sup>182</sup> Romaine, S. (1999). 'Language Standardization and Linguistic Fragmentation in Tok Pisin', in Morgan, M. (ed.) *Language and the Social Construction of Identity in Creole Situations*. Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies Publications, UCLA.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>184</sup> Mufwene, S. (1999). 'On Decreolization: The Case of Gullah', in Morgan, M. (ed.) *Language and the Social Construction of Identity in Creole Situations*. Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies Publications, UCLA, p. 67.

Figure 3.5: Evolution of French and Creole language spoken by the population in Réunion



It can be seen in figure 3.5 that at the beginning of the history of Réunion, the Creole language was not yet spoken. French along the native African, Indian, and Malagasy languages were used. Native languages became less widely-spoken as the French and Creole languages gained status. Between the abolition of slavery and the beginning of Départementalisation, the Creole language gained status was spoken by everybody on the island in place of French. With the integration of Réunion into France in 1946, the Creole language became less widely spoken and the native languages virtually disappeared.

Today however, there appears to be a move towards recreolisation.<sup>185</sup> There is also a renewed study of native languages of the Tamoul, Chinese and Zarab. Linguists have found that new words borrowed from Indian or Madagascan languages are integrated into the existing vocabulary of Réunionese Creole in step with each migration. In the same way, each migration provides new cultures, which integrate into the existing

<sup>185</sup> See further details in Chapter 4.4.

Réunionese culture. The creolisation process continues on both a cultural and linguistic level.

Until the mid 1970s the orthography of all the Creole languages was similar to that of the French system. It appears to be an etymological orthography i.e. based on the original French spelling. The Départementalistes and the Right wing are in favour of this etymological orthography close to the French system. In 1977, Left wing cultural militants set up a Creole writing system known as *lekritir 77*<sup>186</sup> based on a more phonological system. They decided to use different characters to represent the peculiarities and complexities of Creole. For instance 'question' became 'kestion' with the symbol 'k' for 'c' or 'qu'. In 1983, 'w' and 'z' were employed: 'mois' became 'mwa' and 'journal' became 'zjournal'. In 2001 another writing system appeared, known as *lekritir Tangol*.<sup>187</sup> Whereas *lekritir 1977* favours a basilectal variety of Creole spoken in the lowlands of Réunion, the *Tangol* system favours the acrolectal variety. It does, however, allow us to transcribe the Creole language for both Low and Highlands's accents. For instance in *lekritir 1977* the 'u' of 'culture' is transcribed as 'i' ('kiltir'), while in *Tangol* writing the symbol 'i' denotes both 'i' or 'u' ('kiltir'). In the South and Highlands regions inhabitants are more likely to pronounce the 'u' and 'j' typical of the speech of the Petit Blanc, while 'i' and 'z' are more common in the speech of the Kaf and Malbar in the Lowlands and East regions.

In September 2003, the Local Education Authority of Réunion instituted the use of the *Tangol* writing system as an experiment in some schools. The following are examples of the different systems of orthography in use in Réunion:

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<sup>186</sup> First used in 1977.

<sup>187</sup> 'Tangol' is the name of the association of cultural militants.

Il dit que le Paille-en-Queue est un joli oiseau de La Réunion	(Standard French)
Li (lu) di que le Paille-en-Queue lé un joli oiseau de la Réunion	(Etymological ortography of Creole)
Li (lu) di ke le Paille-en-Queue lé un joli zoizo de la Rénion	( <i>lekritir</i> 1977)
Li (lu) di ke lo Payanké lé in zoli zoizo dla Reynion	( <i>lekritir</i> 1983)
Lī di ke lo Payankē lé in zoli zoizo la Reynion	( <i>lekritir Tangol</i> , 2001)

In contrast to Chaudenson,<sup>188</sup> Armand and Chopinet,<sup>189</sup> argue that the definitive form of the Creole language in Réunion is to be seen mainly in novels and stories written in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by authors like Focard and Vinson. Literary production is seldom on accurate representation of a speech form, especially a newly emerged Creole. They argue that these texts 'are not written in one dialect only but in a Cafre, Malgache, black Creole and Petit Blanc style simultaneously'.<sup>190</sup> Scholars from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the late 20<sup>th</sup> century recognise that Creole language is not only influenced by the French and Malgache languages but also African languages. The Census of the slavery period shows that most of the African slaves arrived from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century but a large number of them arrived in the initial stages of colonisation of the island.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century several French and Gros Blanc authors such as Volcy Focard and Auguste Vinson<sup>191</sup> questioned the origins of the Creole language.<sup>192</sup> Focard argued that the Creole language of Réunion is spoken differently according to the ethnic origin of the speaker. He concludes that 'the genuine *patois* of Bourbon is found

<sup>188</sup> See Chaudenson, R. (1992).

<sup>189</sup> See Armand, A. and Chopinet, G. (1983).

<sup>190</sup> Armand and Chopinet, 1983: 23.

<sup>191</sup> See Focard, V. (1884). 'Du Patois créole de l'île Bourbon', *Bulletin de la Société des Sciences et Arts*, Paris. See also Vinson, A. (1882) 'Les Origines du patois de l'île Bourbon', *Bulletin de la Société des Sciences et Arts*.

<sup>192</sup> It could be in a relationship to the origin and the place in the same time.

amongst indigenous black people: the descendants of black slaves born in the island'.<sup>193</sup>

The Creole language in Réunion is unique in terms of vocabulary and grammar, which differ from languages of other islands in the world. It has furthermore evolved from its earlier form based on natural language development with the development of society and based on input from different ethnic, and therefore language, groups. The Creole language of Réunion at that time was already similar to French, perhaps due to the existence of a majority of white colonists who attempted to impose French culture in terms of education and administration in the public sphere.

Added to that, according to Chaudenson<sup>194</sup> the formation of Mauritian Creole did not occur in Mauritius but in Réunion. Chaudenson points out that Bourbon Island was already colonised for half a century when French colonisers left Bourbon in 1721 to settle in Mauritius. The island had been abandoned by the Dutch and was then called *Île de France*. With new slaves 'imported' from Madagascar and whites arriving from Europe, Chaudenson claims that it was the Creole of Réunion that was the instrument of the birth of the Creole language in Mauritius. From this standpoint, the Creole of Mauritius saw an evolution somewhat different to that of Réunion. For instance, the 'basilectal erosion' (decreolisation) which made Creole similar to French has more influence in Réunion than in Mauritius, due to the existence of a significant white population using the French language. In addition, I assert the two Creoles were structurally similar and neither bears more resemblance to the French language.

According to the official data presented in table 3.1 below, Chaudenson's analysis appears weak, as the population distribution in the two islands was strikingly similar:

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<sup>193</sup> Picard, 1884: 190. My translation.

<sup>194</sup> Chaudenson, 1992: 126. My translation.

Table 3.1: Population in Mauritius and Réunion in 1834

Country	Population number			Percent	
	Total	Slaves	Whites	Slaves	Whites
<b>Mauritius</b> (1834)	90,657	61,045	29,612	67.33	32.03
<b>Reunion</b> (1834)	91,000	69,000	22,000	75.82	24.17

Source: Archives Départementales de La Réunion.

The total population stated does not include the emancipated coloureds who were most often Creole.<sup>195</sup> In 1830 a colonial law was enforced to stop counting coloured emancipated slaves and whites separately, and began to count both together. Emancipated coloureds made up the 'mixed-races' or Métis, generally born of a European father and a slave mother.<sup>196</sup> As one can see from the table above, Réunion had a slightly higher population of black people and slightly lower population of white people than Mauritius. 24.2% of the population in Réunion were white compared with 32.0% in Mauritius. I conclude that this was more important in Mauritius than in Réunion. One should not forget that Mauritius was under British colonial rule at this time. In both cases there were less white people than black people. However, in Mauritius from 1834 until today, the Creole language has been far more present in the public sphere. It is partly an illusion that the French political system in colonial history required a great centralisation and standardisation of the language; it is not true to say that everybody spoke French.

The reality is, the situation of the two islands was very similar. The Creole language on the plantations around 1834 was similar in Mauritius and Réunion, as well as in other

<sup>195</sup> Creole was attributed to the White Réunionnais (Gros Blanc and Petit Blanc), as late as the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century in the works of Leblond, A. et M. Leblond, (1914) *La Merise de la Ruée*, Paris: E. Fasquelle and (1905) *Les Romans des Ruées. Les Sortilèges*, Paris: E. Fasquelle.

<sup>196</sup> The black slaves were emancipated only when their masters died. However slaves of wealthy landowners were often sold after the death of the master. This ensured the continued wealth of the landowners' descendants. There is currently a research program on DNA by two research students in Anthropology-Biology. The first results show that the mother line of Réunionnais people is mostly from Africa and the father line mostly from Europe. The final results of this study will only be available at the end of 2005.

French island colonies such as French West Indies, St-Lucia or Seychelles and Haiti (at least amongst the slaves). The difference today is seen mainly in the public sphere. In Mauritius and Seychelles the official language of the public and private sphere is the Creole language. In Réunion the official language of the public sphere is French; while in the private sphere it is the Creole language.

My findings show that a constructive process of recreolisation is evident in Réunion.<sup>197</sup>

This follows from my argument comparing my own analysis with that of the Spanish Caribbean and Latin American situations. The issue of population distribution is no less significant than the political ideology of the dominant cultural presence, in the form of the colonial powers. Chaudenson has an orthodox presentation of Creole language and culture formation.<sup>198</sup>

### 3.41 *Creole language and Départementalisation*

It is a shame that Chaudenson's analysis of the Creole language stopped long before the crucial date of 1946 and that he analyses the variables of ethnicity and class but neglects age, gender and the political situation at the beginning of Départementalisation. I make a comparison here with Cuba and St-Domingue for the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century period. An exclusion of the Creole language or a decreolisation process leading towards a 'Frenchisation' has existed in Réunion since the 1960s.<sup>199</sup> A parallel process of

<sup>197</sup> See figure 3.5 and further details in my survey data in chapter 4.4

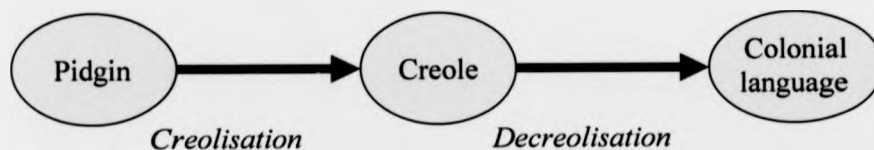
<sup>198</sup> The case of Rodriguez challenges Chaudenson's analysis. In Rodriguez (35,000 inhabitants: 90% black, 9.5% mixed-races, Chinese and Muslim, 0.5% Indo-Mauritian) people of Black-African origins and descendants of the slaves speak Creole. This Creole is closer to the Creole of Mauritius and Seychelles although there are no white people living on this island. (For the data on percentages see Agathe, H. *Études comparées des marchés fonciers de Maurice, de la Réunion et de Rodriguez. Quelles régulations publiques de ces marchés? Entre efficacité et équité des politiques publiques*. Thèse de Doctorat. EHESS, Paris. (Forthcoming).

<sup>199</sup> We can make a comparison here with the Frenchisation of French government with Michel Debré's policies at the beginning of Départementalisation.

'Hispanisation' exists in Cuba and St-Domingue: the construction of identity on these two islands is based on a form of Westernisation.<sup>200</sup>

Raj Mesthrie<sup>201</sup> correctly in my view, defines the Creole language of Réunion as a 'semi-Creole', more similar to French, as compared to Mauritian Creole, which is a fully-fledged Creole language. Why does the Creole language of Mauritius differ to that of Réunion, when contrary to Chaudenson's data, there was a greater number of white people than in Réunion? Secondly why is the Creole language in Réunion so similar to French while in Mauritius, the Creole language differs more greatly from French? The difference might be explained by the different forces of political colonisation. If one looks at the history of Cuba and St-Domingue or Latin America, Réunion is in a similar position. Taking the theory of language decreolisation into account, would a similar cultural decreolisation to the French (or Western) culture occur or alternatively, would there be a return to something similar to the original culture? The theory of linguistic creolisation and decreolisation is shown in the figure below:<sup>202</sup>

**Figure 3.6:** Linguistic creolisation



<sup>200</sup> See Lazarus, N. (2002). 'The Fetish of 'the West' in Postcolonial Theory', in Bartolovich, C. and N. Lazarus, eds. *Museums, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 43.

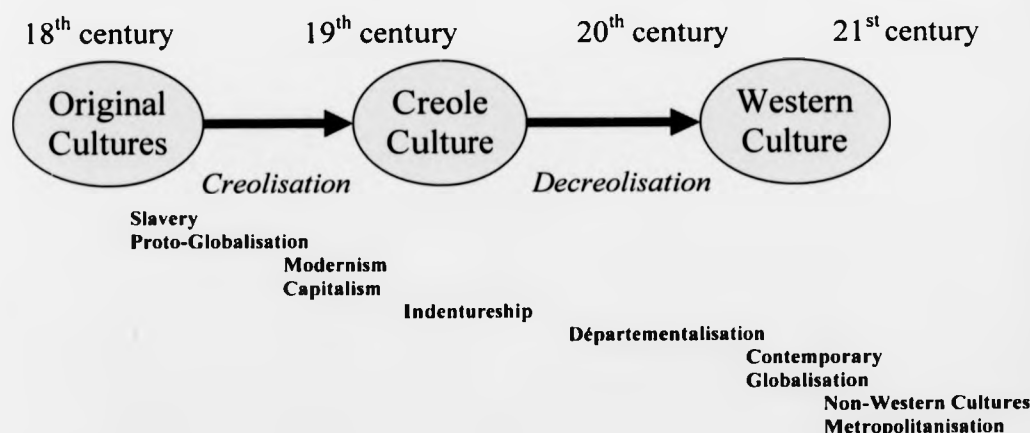
<sup>201</sup> Talk held at the Seminar Series on 'Creolisation and Identity', Pidgins and Creolisation, at the University of Cape Town, 05/03/03.

<sup>202</sup> Figure taken from Raj Mesthrie. 'Pidgins and Creolisation' seminar series on 'Creolisation and Identity' at the University of Cape Town, 05/03/03.



In Réunion, according to our survey, decreolisation occurs more at the top levels of the class structure and is not necessarily restricted to urban areas.<sup>203</sup> Nevertheless, several studies demonstrate that Creole languages can also emerge outside of the context of the plantation after the abolition of slavery: in the mines such as Fanikolo<sup>204</sup> and in urban settings.<sup>205</sup> Based on the linguistic theory of figure 3.6, I introduce here a 'cultural creolisation' theory. In the case of Réunion, cultural creolisation could be represented as follows:

Figure 3.7: Cultural creolisation



<sup>203</sup> See the end of this chapter.

<sup>204</sup> See the works of Bold, J. (1990). *Fanikolo: Phrase Book, Grammar and Dictionary*. Pretoria: Van Schaik. (1955) *Dictionary and Phrase-book of Fanikolo (Kitchen Kaffir: The Lingua Franca of Southern Africa as Spoken in the Union of South Africa)*. Cape Town: Central News Agency.

See also the work of Herbert, R. K. (1992). *Language and Society in Africa: The Theory and Practice of Sociolinguistics*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

<sup>205</sup> See the works of Dittmar, N. and P. Schlobinski, (1988). *The Sociolinguistics of Urban Vernaculars: Case Studies and their Evaluation*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Landenfeld, J. (1990). *Speech and Sociability at French Urban Marketplaces*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Pub. Co.

Romaine, S. (1992). *Language, Education and Development: Urban and Rural Tok Pisin in Papua New Guinea*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Segun, B. (1996) *Les Créoles Parlent aussi Français: Chronique de la Langue des Cités*. Paris: Calman-Lévy.

Calteaux, K. V. (1996) *Standard and Non-Standard African language Varieties in the Urban Areas of South Africa: Main Report for the STANON Research Programme*. Pretoria: HSRC Publishers.

Decreolisation of language and culture occur as a result of the policies enforced since Départementalisation in mass media and education regarding language and culture, which have great social and cultural consequences. Mufwene makes a graphic statement on decreolisation, examining the hypothesis of DeCamp (1971) concerning Jamaican Creole during the post-abolition period, when theoretically 'the former slaves and their descendants would have had greater socio-economic mobility and access to mass education.'<sup>216</sup>

### **3.42 Relationship between colonist and slave languages**

Chaudenson claimed that the overseer (*commandeur*) played a great role in the social structure. The overseers were most often Creoles (Métis) who had been emancipated, or were simply freed to work as overseers. To have an overseer on a plantation field, a master needed to be wealthy and have a minimum of ten slaves. During the period of Habitation there were few landowners who possessed several slaves. Slave owners generally had one to three slaves and a very small number had more than ten slaves. It seems absurd to put an overseer behind one to three slaves especially in the case of the poor whites. Chaudenson himself states that in 1725 there were 1,402 whites and 1775 slaves. Furthermore Antoine Boucher<sup>217</sup> in 1710, cites four slaves on average during the Habitation period. Next, we consider a table showing the evolution of the population in Réunion.

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<sup>216</sup> Mufwene, 1999: 73.

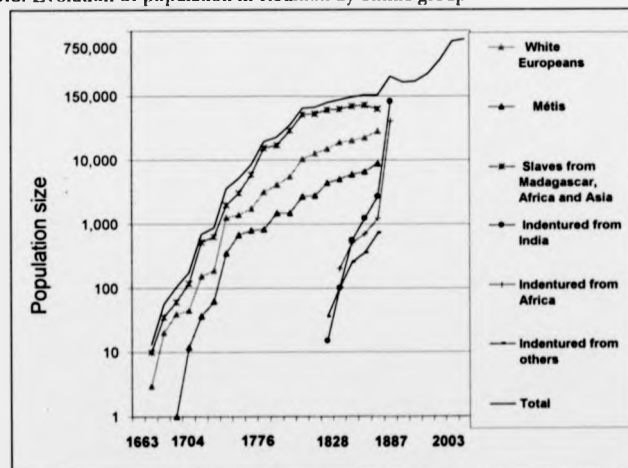
<sup>217</sup> Boucher, A. (1710). *Mémoire pour Servir La Connoissance Particulière de Chacun des Habitants de l'Isle Bourbon*. Paris. (re-ed. Cercle Généalogique de Bourbon, 1989).

**Table 3.2: Evolution of population in Réunion by ethnic group<sup>208</sup>**

Period	White (1) Europeans	Métis	Slaves from Madagascar, Africa (2) and Asia (3)	Indentured from India	Indentured from Africa (4)	Indentured From Others (5)	Total Population
1663	3		10				13
1665	20		36				56
1671	39	1	61				101
1675	45	12	115				160
1700	151	37	512				700
1704	187	62	635				884
1721	1,249	351	2,000				3,600
1725	1,402	673	3,125				5,200
1735	1,779	781	6,013				8,573
1761	3,183	817	15,300				19,300
1776	4,194	1,465	17,106				22,765
1778	5,500	1,500	29,000				36,000
1804	10,500	2,700	50,350				67,000
1807	12,700	2,800	52,000				67,500
1818	15,200	4,450	60,000	15		35 (?)	79,800
1828	19,000	5,000	63,000	100 (?)	200 (?)	100 (?)	87,400
1832	20,100	5,998	69,000	550 (?)	500 (?)	250 (?)	96,398
1835	22,500	6,500	70,406	1,200	700	350	101,656
1848	28,033	8,779	62,000	2,723	1,232	957	103,490
1848-1882				80,000	40,000	2,578	159,190
1887							164,000
1900							170,000
1941							220,000
1962							354,294
2004							750,000

1: Including French, Irish, Dutch, English and so on. From 1804 including emancipated coloured people. 2: Including West, East and South Africa. 3: Including Indian, Malas, and so on. 4: After 1848 including Madagascar, Africa, Comoros Islands, etc. 5: From other regions: Chinese, Muslims, Malaysia and so on.

**Figure 3.8: Evolution of population in Réunion by ethnic group**



<sup>208</sup> This is a summary of my reading of historians: Boucher, A. (1710). Fuma, S. (1992, 1994, 1998, 1999, 2002). Cornbeau, Y. (2002). Eve, P. (1992, 1996, 2000). Gierbeau, H. (1970, 1982, 1998). Vaxellaire, D. (1999). Census 1967, 1974, 1981, 1992 and 1999 and the Revue Cercle Généalogique de Bourbon 2001 & 2002.

From this data, it can be seen that slaves during the plantation period had more contact in the public sphere with white masters than Chaudenson claimed. I think reproduction of native languages occurred through the slave children of migrants. This explains the presence of many Malgache and Hindi words in the Creole language of Réunion. However, no research has been done on the traces of West African and Bantu languages such as Swahili in the Creole language of Réunion. In Mauritius, one can clearly see several words of Malagasy, Senegalese, Malian, Tanzanian or Mozambican origins.<sup>209</sup>

Several sociolinguists from the University of Réunion and elsewhere have based their analysis of the structure of Creole languages on accounts written by writers and travellers who were almost all metropolitan French. As seen above, the majority of white colonists in Réunion were illiterate, having had no formal education: they were pirates, seamen or former prisoners.<sup>210</sup> Sociolinguists and historians have imposed their own metropolitan French background in their accounts of Réunionese Créole. These accounts could be inaccurate since no official grammar or writing system of the Créole language had been compiled at the time. The French masters at that time did not use a Creole language as in the plantation. Therefore they could represent the Creole languages in a manner coloured by their own French language. The affirmation of the similarity of Réunionese Creole to French based on historical travel does not form the basis for sound empirical evidence.

<sup>209</sup> See the work of Baker, P. (1988). 'On the origins of the Mauritian Creole' *Journal of Mauritian Studies*, A 91, Vol. 2, n°2, pp. 41-85. See also Adone, D. (1994). *The Acquisition of Mauritian Creole*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

<sup>210</sup> See Vaxellair, D. (1999). Furma, S. (1998) and Review of *Caribb Cénologique de Bourbon*.

### 3.5 Languages and Eurocentrism

Chaudenson observed that 'the usage of African languages [was] prohibited in the 'habitation' and in the plantation'.<sup>211</sup> This was certainly the case, however, the situation would have been different in the evening. African languages were prohibited in the public sphere but would still have been spoken in the private sphere. Chaudenson neglected to see that after a hard day's work, slaves would go back to sleep in dormitories. They talked to their wives and children in Creole or their native languages (in the case of the first generation of slaves on the island). Slaves would have told stories and sung the 'blues' in the evening, I assume in a mix of native and Creole languages in order to be understood by everybody. The official language was spoken by day and the forbidden language by night. The slave-master relationship reduces the slave's expression of identity to the minimum tolerated by the dominant group of the masters. The slaves would have secretly maintained their own cultural traditions.<sup>212</sup> Art and music have always been a kind of resistance to oppression.

Chaudenson mentions the formation of a Creole language spoken by 'French husbands' and 'Malgache wives'. However, what was the language spoken by French men with Goanese wives, or by European men with Malgache wives to their children? What language would Malgache men have spoken to their Malgache wives? Showing one's Creole culture, (the non-metropolitan, non-official culture) in the public domain has always been taboo and prohibited. This was limited to the private sphere as it echoed the culture of slaves and indentured labourer, in the 'camps'. This leads to a dichotomy, typical of the colonial period with Creole spoken at home and French

<sup>211</sup> Chaudenson, R. (1992), pp 78-80. My translation.

<sup>212</sup> Such as *malya* (dance), *moring* (fight dance), animist cult (beliefs), *servis malgas* (religion), *kari* and *rougay* (gastronomy), etc.

outside the home. This situation of domination and injustice has existed since the 16<sup>th</sup> century and still continues. It arose from the Eurocentrism or metropolitanisation, which now tends towards 'Western centrism', including the influence of American people. It has been inculcated in the Réunionese memory regardless of social class or ethnic background. According to Neil Lazarus, 'the 'West' is constructed [...] as a civilization' [...] 'the inevitable result of this construction is a dematerialised understanding of 'the West' [...] and of modernity, its socio-historical ground [...] as being in a fundamental or primary sense a sort of cultural disposition'.<sup>213</sup> Lazarus sees Westernisation not only in terms of capitalism but also in terms of modernity and understands Eurocentrism 'to answer to the name of the *postcolonial*'.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, Sudel Fuma thinks that 'the domination relationship between masters and slaves reduces identity expression to the strict minimum tolerated by the dominant group of masters. The slaves maintained some cultural and cultural traditions accepted by the colonial authority on conditions that they express themselves clandestinely in the camps'.<sup>215</sup>

This model can be transposed onto the current situation where the official language, French, is used in the public sphere (for example schools, administration and media) and Creole is used in the private sphere (such as in the home amongst family and friends and on popular radio). In linguistic this compartmentalisation has come to be called diglossia. The formation of the Creole language is related to the formation of the culture and vice versa. From this follows a point on the relationship between Indian indentured labourers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the newly arrived migrants from

<sup>213</sup> Lazarus, N. (2002). 'The Fetish of 'the West' in Postcolonial Theory', in Bartolovich, C. and N. Lazarus, eds. (2000). *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press p. 45

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 50

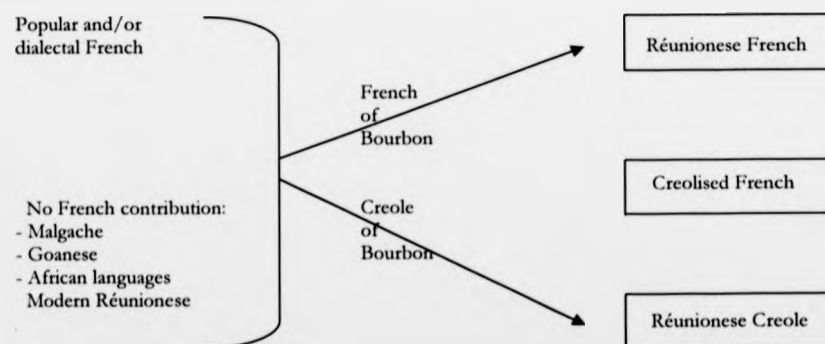
<sup>215</sup> Fuma, S. (1992) *La Moring, art guerrier, ses origines afro-malgache, sa pratique à La Réunion*. St-André: Océan éditions. My translation.

Comoros, Mayotte, Madagascar and Mauritius. The new arrivals would have had to speak Creole language to facilitate integration. This does not apply in the case of the Zorey, since they represent the officials from France. A tension exists between Creole people (Réunionnais) and Zorey who are not fully integrated in the Réunionese society.<sup>216</sup>

### 3.6 Creole language and identity development

The importance of the reciprocal influences of Creole culture and the Creole language, as well as their evolution should be underlined. Réunion is in a new phase of the evolution of the Creole language and culture, as a consequence of Départementalisation and the policy of the French government since the 1960s. Figure 3.9 below represents the evolution of language in Réunion.

**Figure 3.9:** Development of language in Réunion.<sup>217</sup>



This depicts the evolution of the language in linguistic rather than cultural terms. Cultural evolution is based mostly on the Métis Afro-Malgache culture. The development of Réunionese culture is related to the immigration period during slavery and colonialism. The Creole language was an important element of cultural integration

<sup>216</sup> The different sort of tension will be explained later in the thesis especially in Chapter 6.

<sup>217</sup> Figure taken from Benamino, M. (1995). *La Français de La Réunion. Inventaire des Particularités Lexicales*. Paris: ALE.

for migrants and newcomers to the island, especially for the non-European subjects. Today, for instance, Mahorais and Comorians are integrated into Réunionese society by the Creole language. This is because they share the 'social accommodation' (typically council houses) of the working and lower class noticeable from my personal experiences and from my fieldwork. Council houses are mainly inhabited by the Kaf and Métis but also by the Malbar and Petit Blanc. If the Mahorais had upper-class status, or even middle-class status it is highly unlikely that they would ever speak the Creole language.<sup>218</sup> As argued earlier, Réunionese identity has experienced several successive stages that I will identify through the notions of multicultural, intercultural and transcultural society. Réunionese identity is formed under constraint, in a way similar to the tropical plural societies described by J.S. Furnivall. He shows that the union of different racial and cultural elements was not voluntary but 'imposed by the colonial power and by the force of economic circumstances'.<sup>219</sup> According to Furnivall 'despite certain plural features, tropical society was distinct from the plural society which has been created by economic forces'.<sup>220</sup> This is a modern notion, since only in modern times have economic forces been given freedom to remould the social order. The expression 'multicultural society' is therefore similar in intent to Furnivall's 'plural society'.

### 3.61 *Multicultural society*

Multiculturalism can be considered the primary stage of creolisation. Multiculturalism has been present in Réunion since the beginning of its population in 1663. The mechanism was very slow, because of the lack of intercultural communication. Let us

<sup>218</sup> In Mayotte, Mahorais speak French as the official language while the mother tongue is Shimaoré, a Creole of Swahili. The same is true for Comoros Islands, where Comorian and French are the official languages. Again, Comorian is a Creole language of Swahili.

<sup>219</sup> Furnivall, J. S. (1948). *Colonial Policy and Practice. A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 306

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307



return to the chronological chain of different stages of immigration into Réunion. At the beginning of settlement in 1642, Réunion was not easy to colonise. With only a few bays and without a natural harbour, the island was difficult to access, in contrast to Mauritius. Added to this volcanic activity, mountains, ravines and crevices, it can easily be understood how the island's topography contributed not only to the belated settlement of the island but also to its slow economic development in comparison to that of its 'sister island', Mauritius. In 1663, ten men and women from Madagascar arrived with two French men and triggered the period of slavery and also *marooning*. Réunion gradually filled with people while at an international level, the period that Jorge Larain calls 'the Age of competitive capitalism'<sup>221</sup> had begun between 1700 and 1860.

At the beginning of this 'mercantilist' period, Africans, Malgache, Europeans and a small number of Goanese in close contact began to develop a new language: Creole. A sense of solidarity and tolerance existed between the different slave and ethnic groups, due to their shared opposition to the 'white masters'. It was at this time that a new cultural identity was formed: this plural society spelt the beginning of Réunionese society. The word 'Creole' was first applied to Afro-Malgache slaves born in the island colonies. The masters considered them far superior to those born in Africa and Madagascar; they were more 'Westernised' and 'Christianised' than those born outside. The Kaf started to lose their original identity and culture. Two generations after the formation of Réunion, different ethnic groups coexisted without establishing deep cultural exchanges. Mixed relationships were only formed between Malgache and African slaves and some Indians. Couples formed between black and white partners

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<sup>221</sup> Larain, J. (1989). *Theories of Development. Capitalism, Colonialism and Dependency*. London: Polity Press, p.3

were rare because the *Code Noir* prohibited métissage. Where they existed, these relationships were seen as illegitimate and illegal liaisons. In 1764, following the first world economic crisis, the Company of India lost possession of the island and it was bought back by France and its Kingdom. This crisis affected Réunion's coffee industry. It was followed later by the sugar crisis at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This resulted in the impoverishment of the majority of the white population, who from that time were given the derogatory name of 'Petit Blanc'. The changing economic and juridicial status of the island drove forward the democratisation of the métissage between whites and blacks. From this métissage was born what Homi Bhabha <sup>222</sup> has referred to as the 'third space', which was then added to the space-present (i.e. the space of the slaves and that of the masters). According to Braithwaite, in writing of Jamaica, 'the concept of a plural society seems to be a colonial concept rather than a Creole contribution [...] Creole society of the slavery period did not conceive of itself as plural but rather as made of two [superior and inferior] separate cultures'.<sup>223</sup>

Alain Touraine <sup>224</sup> suggests a notion which permits the idea of an intermediary state or space. For him, multiculturalism is different to communitarianism. He sees the difference as due to communication between cultures and not a random coexistence between separate entities. Around the period from 1820 to 1840, Réunion was similar to the USA, Canada, South Africa and the big European capitals of today, in that several cultures are present and coexist in these countries, while retaining their own values and

<sup>222</sup> Bhabha, H.K. (1990). 'The Third Space', in Rutherford, J., ed. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

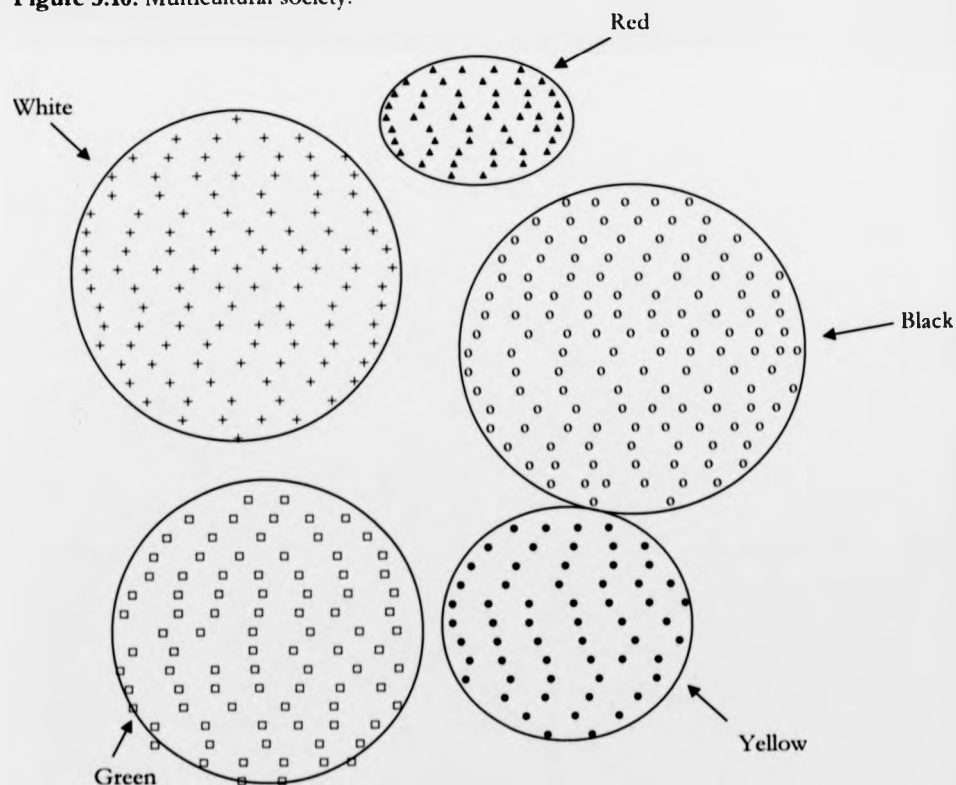
<sup>223</sup> Braithwaite, E. (1971). *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica 1770-1820*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p.311

<sup>224</sup> See Touraine, A. (1996) 'Les Conditions de la Communication Interculturelle: Faux et vrais Problèmes', in Wicvorka, M. *Une Société Fragmentée: Le Multiculturalisme en Débat*. Paris: Découverte.

norms. Furnivall noted that 'outside the tropics a society must have plural features'<sup>225</sup> to be termed a multicultural society. Multiculturalism hinges on the notion of ethnicity: the feeling of ethnic belonging results in the revalorisation by a minority of its particularities of colour, religion and language. There is segmentation of ethnic groups for different historical reasons; individuals do not speak to each other and live separately. In Réunion at that time, there was therefore a 'society with plural features but not plural society'.<sup>226</sup>

Figure 3.10 is my representation of a multicultural society.

**Figure 3.10:** Multicultural society:



<sup>225</sup> Furnivall, J.S. (1948). *Colonial Policy and Practice. A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 305

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 304

In South Africa and Asian countries such as India or Burma and in many large cities of USA, Canada and England where the populations remain divided into groups with the same ethnic background and the different communities do not communicate with each other fully. These are instances of a multicultural society.<sup>227</sup>

### 3.62 *Intercultural society*

Industrial powers, enriched by technical progress then returned to the conquest of unexploited territories by military force enhanced by the European industrial revolution. Economic and social changes born from the latter led to ideological changes. In England, abolitionists were active from the 1830s, while French humanitarian impulses led directly to the abolition of slavery in the French colonies in 1848. At this point, Réunion was still controlled by France: Sarda Garriga, the new governor in the name of the King, announced the 'good news' of liberation.

Larrain calls the period between 1860 and 1945 'the Age of imperialism'.<sup>228</sup> This time-frame coincides with the beginning of the global colonialism and interculturalisation in Réunion. It was just before this period, around 1850 to 1860, that indentured labourers arrived in Réunion from South India. Later, migrants from China and eventually Indian Muslims from Bombay and Gujarat were imported. It would seem that from the time just after the abolition of slavery, the migrants began to lose their African, Malgache, Indian and European original identity and culture to become Réunionnais.

<sup>227</sup> For the comparisons with other societies see the works of Glazer, N. and Moynihan, N. (1963) for American society; See Taylor, C. (1992) for Canadian society. See Parekh, C. (2000) for English society. See Baynes, G. (1998). *The Rainbow Nation?: Identity and Nation Building in Post-Apartheid South-Africa*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

<sup>228</sup> Larrain, 1989: 3.

Christian Jalma a.k.a. Pink Floyd claims that abolition was one of the last faults committed by the proslavery State in terms of identity because the State 'stole from the slaves their African identity'.<sup>229</sup> However, according to Jalma, the abolition of slavery allowed the ex-Afro-Malgache slaves total integration into the Réunionese society. Furthermore, religion played an important role in the formation of identity in Réunion.

Sonia Chane-Kune claims that religion was a 'factor of unification of different ethnic groups and a pillar of the social order in slave society'.<sup>230</sup> Catholicism was introduced very early to the island and was adopted by, and imposed on, the majority of the population. On the other hand, the struggle of the clergy against the proslavery system permitted the gathering of all the ethnic groups, hence reinforcing the abnegation of the people's original identity. Belonging to a common religion marks the first step of profound cultural exchanges in a syncretic ideology. This leads to what Michael Smith refers to as 'modern plural societies [that are] multiracial [...] these racial groups tend also to be culturally distinct'.<sup>231</sup> By cultural plurality, he refers to a 'condition in which two or more different cultural traditions characterise the population of a given society'.<sup>232</sup> Smith states that

'to discover whether or not this heterogeneity obtains, we must make a detailed study of the institutions of the population in which we are interested to discover their form, variety, and distribution. In a culturally homogeneous society, such institutions as marriage, the family, religion, property and the like are common to the total population. Where cultural plurality obtains, different sections of the total population practise different forms of these common institutions; and because institutions involve patterned activities, social relations, and idea-systems, in a condition of cultural plurality, the culturally differentiated sections will differ in their internal social organisation, their institutional activities, and their system of belief and value. Where this condition of cultural plurality is found, the societies are plural societies'.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>229</sup> Pink Floyd in *Le JIR*, 12 Mars 2001. My translation.

<sup>230</sup> Chane-Kune, 1991: 15. My translation.

<sup>231</sup> Smith, M.G. (1965). *The Plural Society in the British West Indies*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, p. 88

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14

Furnivall points out that plural societies were observed exclusively in the tropics. However, the new Réunionese society resulting from slavery is a classic example of the plural society as defined by Furnivall. Taking the example of Burma, he noted that people

'mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways [...] As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling [...] with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit'.<sup>234</sup>

Bronislaw Malinowski also refers to a 'culturally mixed group'<sup>235</sup> in Africa which he classifies by a system of 3 columns (A, B and C) defining the social interrelations and cultural interactions arising through the 'process of culture contact and change' between groups. In column A, he places the 'European influences, interests and intentions [under] the white policy',<sup>236</sup> i.e. the culture of the white master. In column B, he places 'the process of culture contact and change [...] activities in which black and white meet, cooperate and influence each other directly',<sup>237</sup> i.e. the culture of the Creole people. Column C represents all 'traditional institutions and memory and legends [containing] elements of African life not recognised officially by the white administration [...] there is some internal resistance [such as] beliefs, practices and ethical influences of ancestors'.<sup>238</sup> This is the culture of the colonised blacks. He concludes that column B is by no means 'a mechanical compound or a direct product of the mixture of A and C. This is a fundamental point in describing the Creole cultural identity. The formation of a cultural identity in Réunion is distinguished by the construction of a similar 'B'

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., p. 304.

<sup>235</sup> Malinowski, B. (1945). *The Dynamics of Culture Change. An Inquiry Into Race Relations in Africa*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p. 154.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

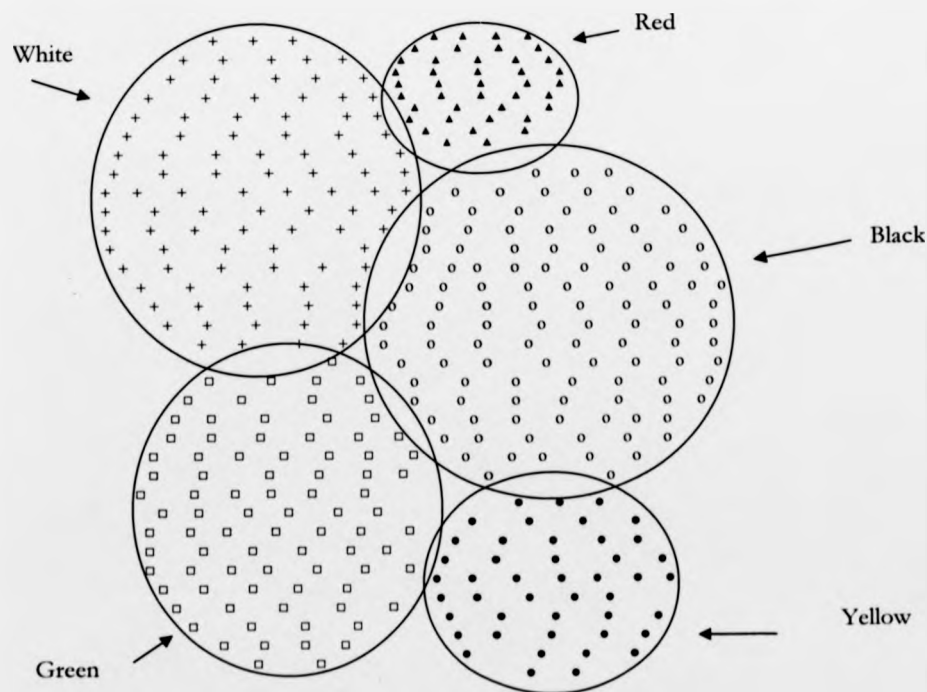
<sup>237</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

identity. Social interactions between indentured labourers led directly to an 'indefinable métissage'.<sup>239</sup>

An intercultural society, therefore, is based on sharing and mingling, with intercultural relationships based on the fusion of two different cultures. From a sociological standpoint, the consolidation of actual Réunionese Creole people and a Réunionese cultural identity dates from between 1900 and 1940, which marked the beginning of cultural interactions. Cultural interactions or social processes are defined through the context of creolisation. 'Where cultural homogeneity obtains, the societies are homogeneous units'.<sup>240</sup> Figure 3.11 below shows an example of intercultural society.

**Figure 3.11:** Intercultural society



<sup>239</sup> See Glissant, P. (1997). My translation.  
<sup>240</sup> Smith, 1965: 14

In Mauritius, certain Caribbean islands and certain Asian societies,<sup>241</sup> as well as in large cities, the population reproduces the same ethnic background. These societies are examples of intercultural societies. Communication occurs between the different ethnic groups but intermarriage does not occur. However from the eve of the Second World War, the Réunionese people began to experience what I call transcultural creolisation.

### 3.63 *Transcultural society*

The period from 1945 to the present has seen Réunion bound up with what may be termed transcultural phenomenon. This corresponds to what Larain called 'late capitalism'.<sup>242</sup> Within a few days of the end of the Second World War, the Réunionnais saw their island transformed into a French Département with full French citizenship. Progressive Antillese and Réunionese sought social equality in their fight for the French Département status. Following this, Départementalists from the Right wing requested the assimilation of Réunion to France, a process completed more swiftly through the intervention of Michel Debré.<sup>243</sup> With the arrival of the first metropolitan civil servants in the 1950s, a parallel society developed and had the effect of providing a new infrastructure of goods and services. French values were integrated into the Réunionese creolisation and métissage processes in this way. These processes may be approximated through the use of the term 'transculturation'. According to Jean Loup Amselle, this is the appropriate term to describe this form of contact of cultures, involving 'a circulation of practices which creates a constant interweaving of symbolic forms and empirical

<sup>241</sup> For comparisons with other societies see the works of Chan-Low, J. (1998; 1999), Arno, T. (1986) and Allen, R. (1999) for Mauritian society. See Furnivall, J.S. (1948) for Burma and Indian societies. See Smith, M.G. (1965), Burton, R. (1997) and Hintjens, H. (1997) for Caribbean societies.

<sup>242</sup> Larain, 1989: 3.

<sup>243</sup> Michel Debré was white French, one of the creators of the fifth republic, former prime minister to General de Gaulle, and ex-foreign and home affairs minister. He served as a MP in Réunion between 1962 and 1987.



activities among the different interacting cultures [and métisses]'.<sup>244</sup> Anthropologist Fernando Ortiz first used the term transculturation in 1940<sup>245</sup> to describe métissage. Unlike Huntington,<sup>246</sup> Ortiz observed that during culture clashes and the transition from one culture to another, a total deculturation or acculturation do not occur. Rather there is a process where new cultural products are produced. For him, transculturation distinguishes the force of the secondary culture to produce its own version of the leading culture. In a context of transculturation, exchanges are reciprocal, unfinished and result in a primary métis culture. Ortiz illustrates the development by which a dominated people decide on the facets of the leading culture they will adopt. Ortiz argues that the neologism 'transculturation'

'better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another, because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word acculturation really implies; but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of the previous culture, which could be defined as a deculturation. In addition it carries the idea of consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called neoculturation. [...] The concept of transculturation is fundamental and indispensable to an understanding of the history of [slavery islands] whose history [...] is an intense, complex, unbroken process of transculturation of human groups, all in a state of transition'.<sup>247</sup>

Further, Mary Louise Pratt<sup>248</sup> maintains that transculturation does not have to be confined to the social spaces where different cultures intersect. It can be extended to everyday situations, such as classrooms. Pratt defines transculturation as a creation of the 'contact zone'. Contact zones are social spaces where diverse cultures convene, conflict and wrestle with each other. She argues that transculturation is

<sup>244</sup> Amselle, J.-J. (2001). *Branchement: Anthropologie de l'Universelle des Cultures*. Paris: Flammarion, p. 201

<sup>245</sup> Ortiz, F. (1940). 'Del fenómeno de la transculturación y su importancia en Cuba', in Ortiz, F. *El contrapunto cubano del azúcar y del tabaco*. La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales. My translation.

<sup>246</sup> See Huntington, S. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

<sup>247</sup> Ortiz, 1940: 33.

<sup>248</sup> Pratt, M. L. (1999). 'Arts of the Contact Zone' in Bartholomae, D. and A. Petrosky, Eds. *Ways of Reading* 5th ed. Boston: St. Martin's, 1999, pp 582-596

'a phenomenon of the contact zone [...] while the imperial metropolis tends to understand itself as determining the periphery [...] it habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis [...] beginning, perhaps, with the latter's obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself'.<sup>249</sup>

Transculturation understood as a process in which cultural contact develops, is transposable to several situations. Pratt explains that transculturation occurs at a personal and individual level, affecting the social identity of the subject. The emotional facet of the identity of the subject is engaged in transcultural development. These emotions are the result of cultural interactions and contacts. Moreover, in the transcultural period and during Départementalisation, secular education became accessible to everyone. This resulted in the gathering of different ethnic groups and cultures around a second uniting principle, i.e. the 'Republican norms'. At that time Réunion bore more resemblance to a plural society, exhibiting a 'cultural pluralism'. Smith points out that 'cultural pluralism is not confined to plural societies, although it is their basis'.<sup>250</sup> Here I concur that 'plural society arises where economic forces are exempt from control by social will. Its general appearance in the modern tropics [occurs] because [in all cases] the social order seems to have had plural features'.<sup>251</sup>

Furnivall explains in this way that a great variety of forms exist in a plural society and such forms may depend on the distinctive character of a particular modern tropical economy. Smith notes that 'modern economic forces may account for colonial pluralities'.<sup>252</sup> François Laplantine further suggests that métissage is 'the uncertain moment which is not a matter of knowledge but a changing knowledge'.<sup>253</sup> By changing

<sup>249</sup> Pratt, M. I. (1992). *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge, p.12

<sup>250</sup> Smith, 1965: 87

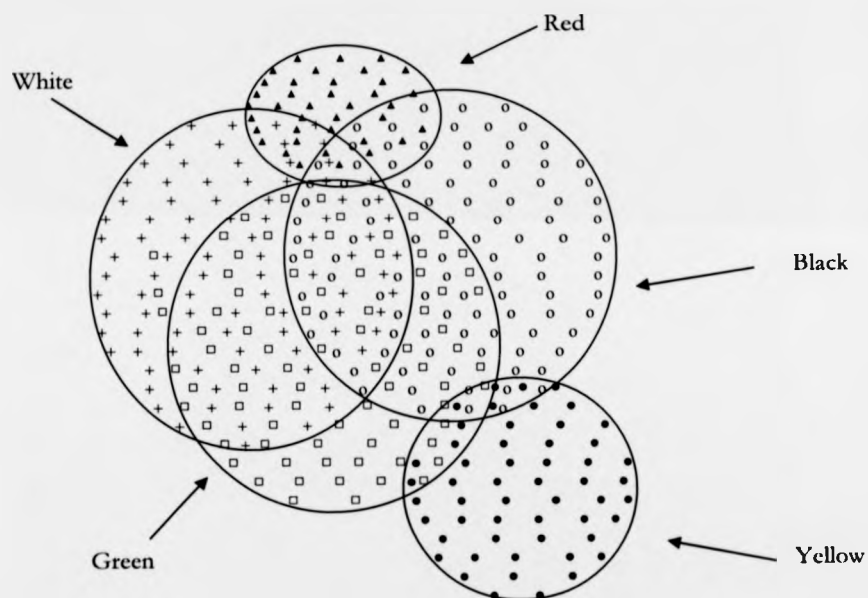
<sup>251</sup> Furnivall, 1948: 306.

<sup>252</sup> Smith, 1965: 89.

<sup>253</sup> Laplantine, F. (1999). 'Le Métissage, moment improbable d'une connaissance vibratoire', *X-Alba*, n° 2/3, p. 39. My translation.

knowledge, Laplantine refers to 'a knowledge of the darkness', a latent and unconscious knowledge: 'métissage are those very rare movements which arise before the identity cement sets'.<sup>254</sup> Figure 3.12 shows an example of a transcultural society.

**Figure 3.12:** Transcultural society



In the case of Réunion, Brazil, Cuba, Cape Verde and similar societies,<sup>255</sup> there is limited reproduction of the ethnic groups. High rates of exogamy occur and the ethnic groups communicate freely amongst each other. Ethnic crossovers are stronger in the lower and middle social classes. These societies exhibit a transcultural societal structure.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., p. 39

<sup>255</sup> For comparisons with other societies see the works of Sansone, L. (1997) for Brazilian society. See Lesourd, M. (1996) for Cape Verdian society. See Ortiz, F. (1940) for Cuban society.

### 3.7 Identity search movements.

Between 1979 and 1981, Réunionnais became Europeans and the Left wing came to power in France. In 1981, one hundred and thirty three years after the abolition of slavery in 1848, 20 December was finally recognised as a public holiday. This recognition afforded certain ethnic groups in Réunion their right to be different. These groups celebrated their differences through various cultural and religious organisations from the beginning of the 1980s, thanks to enhanced education and means of communication. The groups reconstructed an identity which had been subordinated during the formation of Réunionese society while aiming, at the same time, to share this common history with other groups. The identity that these groups sought to embrace more closely was idealised and did not correspond to a tangible reality due to the lack of contact between the various ethnic groups and their respective countries of origin. This idealised identity stems from a collective fantasy that Carpanin Marimoutou calls a 'fragmented identity'.<sup>256</sup> These identities were fabricated over the last fifteen to twenty years. They include, for instance, the Renouveau Tamoul and Petit Blanc, Kaf, Zarab and Chinois communities.<sup>257</sup> This evolution does not explain why people continue to refer to and recognise themselves in terms of these identities. This process is a form of 'cultural re-appropriation', the 'glocality' and 'identity awakening' to which Roland Robertson refers.<sup>258</sup>

In Réunion, the upper and middle classes of these ethnic groups evaded the process of creolisation through pressure from the community to keep to their own class and

<sup>256</sup> See Marimoutou, J.-C. (1995).

<sup>257</sup> See Média, L. (2002). 'Identity formation in Réunion island'. Paper presented at the conference on 'Transformations and Cultural Exchanges in the Indian Ocean Zone', University of Los Angeles, California, April 2002.

<sup>258</sup> See Robertson, R. (1992). *Globalization, Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage.

religion, for instance in the choice of a spouse. In the case of the Gros Blanc group and the majority of Zarab and Chinois, endogamy is the rule (although a Zorey partner is also acceptable) perhaps because the economic wealth of the island is in the hands of these three ethnic groups as well as a few Malbar.<sup>259</sup> The case of the Zorey is particular, as they are found at all strata of the population, showing a phenomenon that is of the order of post-colonial alienation.<sup>260</sup> On the other hand, creolisation is still in action in the majority of middle class and working class communities.<sup>261</sup> Members of the lowest social classes live mainly in social housing schemes and in the highlands of the island. In Réunion, representatives of all ethnic groups exist in the working class and middle class but the majority are Kaf, Malbar, Petit Blanc and Métis. Creolisation is signified by the practice of the Creole language. This phenomenon echoes the case described by Cohen where 'social identity [is] reduced to class identity'.<sup>262</sup> In the Réunionese case, it can be seen that creolisation and métissage are present first and foremost in the lower and middle classes of society.

It is important to note that many ethnic groups on the island did not manage to stay in touch with their native countries during the period of the formation of Réunionese cultural identity (from 1663 to the 1970s there were no significant contacts with the countries of origin). Moreover, since the time of slavery, the Western model, in terms of economy, culture and society has been the dominant and official model reinforced by Départementalisation. The question arises whether identity and culture could be cyclical.

<sup>259</sup> See the work of Labache, J. (1997) on ethnicity in Réunion.

<sup>260</sup> See the works of Fanon, F. (1952). *Peau Noire, Masque Blanc*. Paris: Maspéro.

<sup>261</sup> Members of the lumpen-proletariat to use the term employed by Marx and developed by Gramsci and Fanon.

<sup>262</sup> See Cohen, 1997: 129.

The evolution of identity and culture is related to economic and political context. The present context of contemporary globalisation to some extent replicates the economic structures of domination at place during colonisation. (However, contemporary migrants retain their original religions and cultural identity and are reluctant to take part in the process of creolisation). In line with Robertson's notion of 'glocality',<sup>263</sup> capitalism brought about by globalisation with an ultra-liberalist tendency has changed behaviours related to identity and culture into identity strategies. It makes sense to speak of the formation of identity rather than the construction of identity. These formations of culture and class structure in Réunion can be seen as a consequence of the colonial situation. These structures were determined according to the interests of a small part of the ruling bourgeoisie, who implemented different policies leading to underdevelopment. The problem of dependency results from this formation of social classes.<sup>264</sup>

### 3.8 Creole social identity

I have argued that social relations are linked to the economy and culture, especially with respect to language, as part of a historical process. The Creole language, as a cultural contact element, has formed the link between all the ethnic groups on the island since the first settlements. Scholars Harris and Rampton have affirmed that 'there do seem to be good grounds for doubting the value of traditional Creole language study as a

<sup>263</sup> See Robertson, R. (1992). *Globalisation: Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage, pp.173-174

<sup>264</sup> Laram, 1989: 124.

ground-breaking model or template for the analysis of cultural contact'.<sup>265</sup> To illustrate the truth of this, they mention how and to what extent language, discourse and interaction articulate with other levels of cultural organisation and flow<sup>266</sup> formed during the plantation and indentureship periods. Thierry Gilles argues that 'social markers in speech play an important role in ethnicity and ethnic group relations'.<sup>267</sup> This may have relevance and significance for the social identity of the disoriented subject in Réunion. He draws our attention to the fact that 'ethnic speech markers are a *valued* dimension of group identity, as they are for many ethnic collectivities [...] It might be expected on the basis of Tajfel's thesis that group members will attempt to gain a positive social identity by accentuating linguistic differences between themselves and the outgroup'<sup>268</sup> in the cultural interaction and contact spaces. The Creole language can here be represented as ethnic speech because it is a language used by all ethnic groups in Réunion, in contrast with French which is solely the language of the white metropolitans. According to Parsons, the legitimisation of identity is also based on 'religious orientations'<sup>269</sup> fundamental as markers for Réunionese people. Parsons illustrates this by the loss of 'societal identity through disintegration or absorption by some larger societal system'.<sup>270</sup> He goes on to explain that the society is required to be the 'bearer' of a cultural organisation adequately simplified and mixed to 'legitimise the normative order'. He puts forward the case that 'such legitimisation requires a system of constitutive symbolism which grounds the identity and solidarity of the community, as

<sup>265</sup> Harris, R. and B. Rampton, (1999). 'Creole Metaphors in Cultural Analysis: The Limits and Possibilities of Sociolinguistics'. Presented in the Transnational Communities Programme Seminar Series 'Considering Creolization', 11 November 1999. University of Oxford, Michaelmas, p. 10.

<sup>266</sup> Harris and Rampton, 1999: 17.

<sup>267</sup> Gilles, T. (1982). 'Linguistic Differentiation in Ethnic Groups', in H. Tajfel, ed. *Differentiation Between Social Groups*. London: Academic Press, p. 381.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387.

<sup>269</sup> Parsons, 1969: 12.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

well as beliefs, rituals, and other cultural components which embody such symbolism' <sup>271</sup>  
pertinent for interethnic connections.

Parsons proposed that a fundamental relationship exists between social identity needs and various forms of intergroup activities in a plural society. Like Parsons, Tajfel gives the perspicacious comment that 'social identity in intergroup relations must be analysed in ways which take explicitly into account the wider social contexts within which the groups function'. <sup>272</sup>

According to Tajfel,

'the effects of the nature and subjective importance of these memberships on those aspects of an individual's behaviour which are pertinent to intergroup relations – without in the least denying that this does not enable us to make any statements about the 'self' or about social behaviour in other contexts [...] 'Social identity' as defined here is thus best considered as a shorthand term to describe [...] limited aspects of the concept of Self which are relevant to certain limited aspects of Social behaviour'. <sup>273</sup>

All of this is accompanied by the force of all individuals in contact with other ethnic groups in the society. To sum up the arguments, I have put forward the notion that a people's social identities prevail strongly through social contrast, which distinguishes the 'ingroup' from significant 'outgroups'. According to the previously cited scholars, acknowledgement of the 'outgroup' validates behaviour towards the unknown groups which can prevent racism and discrimination in a plural society. The history of Réunion has seen the mixing of cultural contacts out of this situation, a Creole social identity has been formed on the island which forms part of their psychodynamic conception of being.

<sup>271</sup> Parsons, T. (1966) *Societies: Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives*. London: Prentice, p. 9

<sup>272</sup> Tajfel, H., ed. (1982). *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 5

<sup>273</sup> Tajfel, H. (1978) 'Social Categorization, Social Identity and Social Comparison', in H. Tajfel, ed. *Differentiation Between Social Groups*. London: Academic Press, p. 63



### 3.81 *Social stratification in Réunion*

The following table illustrates the present social stratification of Réunion: showing how social class and rank compare to ethnic origin, economic and psychological power. This social structure is the consequence of 185 years of slavery, 98 years of colonialism and 57 years of Départementalisation in Réunion. Analysis of the social stratification in Réunionese society may be made more accurate by considering the ranking of all the ethnic groups present on the island.

Table 3.3: Social class rank in Réunion

Economic Class	Ethnic Origins		Cultural attributes/ Expression	Phenotypical Attribution
+  Upper Class	Gros Blanc	97% are businessmen, high civil servants, doctors...	French culture and language Endogamy No creolisation Listen to Sèga music White-collar delinquency Single religion Chinese and Malbar return to original religion Listen to Sèga music and eat Creole food French culture and language Live in posh area	+  <b>Whiteness</b>  Zorey  Gros Blanc  Petit Blanc from Lowlands
	Zorey	60% are high civil servants, doctors, businessman...		
	Zarab	60% are high traders, civil servants doctors, businessman...		
	Chinois	50% are high traders, civil servants doctors, businessman...		
	Malbar	15% in all domains		
	Petit Blanc	10% in all domains		
	Métis	10% in all domains		
	Kaf	1% self-employed		
—  Middle Class	Karane	99.9% businessmen, own petrol stations and hotels	No creolisation French culture and language Listen to Sèga music  Listen to Sèga and Maloya music and eat Creole food  Some cross-ethnocultural weddings Some creolisation French and Creole cultures and languages Some métissage Exogamy Live in self-owned residences and houses	—  Métis  Chinois  Petit Blanc from Highlands  Zarab  Malbar
	Zorey	40% normal civil servants, employees, self-employed...		
	Gros Blanc	3% normal civil servants, employees, self-employed...		
	Chinois	30% normal civil servants, employees, self-employed...		
	Zarab	30% normal civil servants, employees, self-employed...		
	Petit Blanc	30% normal civil servants, employees, self-employed...		
	Métis	30% normal civil servants, employees, self-employed...		
	Malbar	35% normal civil servants, employees, self-employed...		
+  Lower Class	Kaf	20% normal civil servants, employees, self-employed...	Creole culture and language Exogamy Creolisation Strong exogamy and métissage Listen to Maloya music and eat Creole food Several religions and beliefs Hip Hop culture  Almost all prisoners are from these groups.  Live in council houses, blocks of flats, social houses, shanty, Highlands.	—  Kaf  Malgache  Karane  Komor  <b>Blackness</b>
	Komor & Malgache	1% civil servants, employees, self-employed...		
	Métis	60% clerks, subaltern, jobs, unemployed...		
	Petit Blanc	60% clerks, subaltern, jobs, unemployed...		
	Chinois	20% clerks, subaltern, jobs, unemployed...		
	Zarab	10% clerks, subaltern, jobs, unemployed...		
	Malbar	50% clerks, subaltern, jobs, unemployed...		
	Kaf	79% clerks, subaltern, jobs, unemployed...		
—	Komor & Malgache	99% clerks, subaltern, jobs, unemployed		
		<b>Black</b>		

Sources:

- Labache, L. (1997). *L'Ethnicité à La Réunion: Vers un Melting pot?* Paris: EHESS (taken from her conclusions based on 692 extensive questionnaires on ethnicity in Réunion).
- Picard, D. (2001). *Les Nouveaux Jardins Sacrés. Insularité Tropicale et Intégration Globale: Une Approche Anthropologique du Tourisme International à La Réunion*. Thèse de Doctorat Université de La Réunion (taken from Picard's fieldwork observations in the hostels).
- Ho, H-Q. (2001). *38 Chefs d'Entreprises de la Réunion Témoignent. Destins de Famille, Interculturalité et Economie*. St-André: Editions Azalées. (based on biographies of general managers of Réunion's 38 largest companies).
- Lee Tin, R. (2000). *Les Chinois de La Réunion*. Thèse de Doctorat. Paris: EHESS.
- Ismael-Daoudjee, A. (2002). *Les Indo-Musulmans Gujaratis*. St-André: GRATHIER éditions.

This is the first table of its kind to be compiled in Réunion. After reading the work of the Réunionese scholars cited, I put together a representation based on socio-ethnical class. This table is also based on personal observations and experiences, derived firstly from my life in Réunion until 1998, and secondly from the fieldwork I conducted in several parts of the island from December 2001 to September 2002. Determination of the ethnic origin is based on my own observations and on qualitative data, and not on a questionnaire where participants could define themselves in terms of ethnic origins. The following list cites various institutions I have consulted to obtain the above data and observations:

1. State administrations:  
Prefecture, Customs offices, Taxation offices, Police, *Gendarmerie*, Military, Prisons, ILEA, Job Centre, INSEE and Unemployment Benefit Offices.
2. Local and public organisations and government:  
Conseil Régional, Conseil Général, 24 city councils and associations.
3. Companies:  
Score, Cora, Carrefour, Caillé, Foucques and Ravate.
4. Hotels:  
Le St-Denis, Les Mascareignes, Le St Alexis, Le Juliette Dodu and L'Appolonia.
5. The results of my survey: crosstabulations of ethnic group with Monthly income (See Table 4.27)

The percentage is an estimate arrived at by calculations extracted from all the above data. It is not based on specific data from any government source or specific research.

Using this ranking, I propose the analysis in line with Winford (1999) that 'ethnic differences play a major role in social differentiation'<sup>274</sup> or stratification. Parsons called the system of stratification in society 'the criteria by which units in a social system are given a generalized status rank, one which transcends specificity of function or situation'.<sup>275</sup> I note that a continuum of superiority and inferiority exists among the various ethnic groups which is stratified along racial lines, important to the differentiation of social class. Table 3.3 also shows that social relationships between the Kaf and Malbar groups are much closer than between either of these groups and the Petit Blanc group. The Chinois and especially the Zarab group are isolated. The Gros Blanc and Zorey groups are very closely related. As a matter of fact, the first mixed people from French and Malgache backgrounds or from French and Indian backgrounds are considered as belonging to the white population. Even today, the descendants of the colonial white families still rarely intermarry with people of Indian and African descent. Colonial prejudices according to race still operate in this society. Despite the abolition of slavery strong racial prejudice inherited from the slavery system still operates.

Whiteness places the subject at the top of the social class scale and vice versa, blackness places the subject at the bottom of the social class scale. The socio-economic structure of Réunion is still 'colonised'. This can inhibit lower and middle class identity development. I argue that 'without fear of contradiction, [...] until the end of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some traces of slavery persisted inside the consciousness',<sup>276</sup> in

<sup>274</sup> Winford, D. (1999). 'Sociolinguistic Approaches to Language Use in the Anglophone Caribbean', in Morgan, E. (ed.) *Language and the Social Construction of Identity in Creole Situations*. Los Angeles: UCLA, CAAS publications.

<sup>275</sup> Parsons, T. (1969). *Politics and Social Structure*. London: Macmillan, p.435

<sup>276</sup> Poirier, J. et S. Puma, (1999). 'Mémoire collective de la Départementalisation', in Macatré, E. 1946: *La Réunion Département regard sur La Réunion contemporaine*. Paris: L'Harmattan, pp. 101-107

accordance with Fuma and Poirier. It is evident in the social stratification that union and division of particular groups in plural societies is 'not voluntary, but it is imposed by the colonial power and by the force of economic circumstances'.<sup>277</sup> Edouard Hervé in 1869<sup>278</sup> demonstrated the power of the colonial machine in 1868, citing a bloody riot in the capital of Réunion. He pointed out that this riot, occurring twenty years after the abolition of slavery, was the result of the colonial system inherited from slavery, which was still dominated by ancient masters in positions of authority and private businesses. Hervé refers to the lack of competence of administration headed by the Gros Blanc and a few French civil servants. He goes on to ask: 'how shall we conceive a reform of our colonial institutions?'.<sup>279</sup>

With Départementalisation the passage from the primary to the tertiary sector was artificially imposed and has occurred very swiftly. This has led to a form of social stratification characterised by economic domination by certain socio-professional groups (professionals, business people and civil servants). Certain ethnic groups (the Indians and the Chinese) saw their standards of living improve and this had repercussions on the positioning of their identity. Research by Labache<sup>280</sup> shows that in popular culture métissage is more important to the young, who express common elements in ethnic terms, than among the elderly. The young people refer to themselves as Creole or Réunionese whereas older people regard their native ethnic origins as more important.

<sup>277</sup> Furnivall, J.S. in Smith, M.G. (1965). *Stratification in Grenada*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, p.3

<sup>278</sup> Hervé, E. (1869). 'L'île de La Réunion et la Question Coloniale', *La Revue des deux mondes*, janvier 1869, pp. 747-768

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., p. 767

<sup>280</sup> See Labache, L. (1999).

### 3.9 Conclusion

Chaudenson attempted to illustrate by the case of Réunion three hypotheses advanced by Baker and Corne in 1986. In taking the example of Spanish colonisation, Chaudenson noted the non-formation of Creole languages but failed to note the formation and the existence of Creole cultures. However a Spanish Creole culture does exist in Cuba, St-Domingue and Puerto-Rico and therefore a Spanish cultural creolisation also exists. So, taking as examples the case of these islands as explained earlier, culture prevails over language. By this I mean that political forces are able to control the languages and lifestyle but not the culture of individuals or groups. Nevertheless, I do not believe that Creole language in Réunion can be reduced to a statistical exercise as Chaudenson argued.<sup>281</sup>

As has been seen, cultural identity and creolisation are processes which progress in space and time. Factors such as geographical situation, education and social circle are important in the process of identity construction. The current debate on the Réunionese identity focuses on the relations between these elements, which are different at group and individual levels. Today the Creole language and culture are in the majority numerically but are in a position of less value when compared to the French language and culture, itself in a numerical minority. Placed in a dominant situation, the French government recognises and passively tolerates the identity of the minorities. However, the allowances made to the locals are in superficial aspects such as folklore and not in terms of deep values and convictions. Ethnic groups such as the Kaf, Malbar and Petit Blanc form part of an ethnic, economic, cultural and identity 'minority' although they

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<sup>281</sup> See figure 3.4 in Chapter 3.

are numerically in the majority. They also make up the rural and urban lower classes that constitute the mass of the population. Moreover, these groups are at the core of the Creole culture and language, especially in the case of the Kaf.

As seen earlier,<sup>282</sup> there were different forms of Creole languages and therefore different cultures present on the island. These coexisted, forming a pattern of transculturation. Transculturation is a cultural process which leads to a heterogeneous and diverse society. These transcultural elements are found in creolisation, with the accumulation of interactional and transactional cultural elements from all the ethnic groups meeting within the same contact zone in a small area. Creole linguistic, cultural and identity formation can be defined through the process of transculturation described by Ortiz, Pratt and Amselle. Transculturation through cultural creolisation nowadays has a huge impact on identity in Réunion. The process of transculturation begins with language, especially in the historical formation of the Creole language, and is one of the ways in which languages are transformed over time to form part of a specific social identity. In contemporary Réunion, individuals now have a sense of belonging to such a social group and they adopt certain specific behaviours to express their social identity. Réunionese social identity is not innate, but rather results from the socialisation of the people in this society. It is also a dynamic process resulting from the interaction of several different elements such as social role and the consciousness of individuals of their belonging to the same or conflicting groups. People's social identities are therefore continued first and foremost through social connections.

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<sup>282</sup> With Focard, V. (1884).

An integration of these theories could lead to a better understanding of intergroup relationships and social cohesion as well as of phenomena linked to collective identities such as nationalism and interethnic conflict.



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## CHAPTER IV

### Questionnaire Analysis: Context and Culture

#### 4.1 Introduction: Form of the data and material methods of collection

Current studies on culture and identity, especially in Réunion, are predominantly qualitative in nature. In broad terms, qualitative methods are most often preferred by institutional, feminist and discourse approaches.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, quantitative methods are mostly associated with behavioural work and rational choice theory. The strength of quantitative methods is that the results can be generalised to large populations with a high degree of certainty and they are representative and reliable. Systematic statistical analysis ensures that the findings and interpretations are robust.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the new millennium I decided to study cultural identity in Réunion, currently a topic of great political sensitivity. Réunion is at a turning point in its history with its constitutional status under question, the most important political decision since 1946. Réunionnais are concerned about their 'national' identity, understanding that all identities are in a process of transition. The right of difference needs to be upheld in order to eradicate racism and discrimination and maintain a balance in this multi-cultural and multi-religious society.

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<sup>1</sup> Devine, F. (1995). *Qualitative Methods: Theory and methods in political science*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Hellevik, G. (1984). *Introduction to causal analysis*. London: George Allen & Unwin;

See also: De Vaus, A. (1991). *Surveys in Social Research*. London: Unwin Hyman.

This is the most large-scale and in-depth survey of its kind attempted in Réunion to date. The survey probes deeply on a sociological and political level. It is original in its conception, in its design and in its theoretical ambition. It is also original insofar as I have conducted a formal social investigation. This is the first major attempt to sample opinion in Réunion and poses questions which have never been asked before.<sup>3</sup>

Is this the best method of studying cultural identity, inter-ethnic relations and language practices? In Western countries, survey study has become an essential tool in understanding these phenomena. For more than a decade now scholars have periodically measured cultural attitudes, values and behaviour in this way. Most Western countries provide public funding for regular surveys conducted throughout the year and particularly after conflicts (especially England and the USA).

These periodic measures of public opinion generate important raw empirical data, providing important information for policy makers about citizen response to policy initiatives and institutional reforms, as well as directions for the future. The use of quantitative methods based on survey studies to understand cultural behaviours in Réunion is a relatively new concept. This is partly due to the fact that there is a lack of expertise in Social Sciences especially in Sociology. In fact, one of the main obstacles to the proper study of popular opinions is the lack of surveys

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<sup>3</sup> A survey was conducted in 1997 made by Bernard Cathelat on the 'Réunionese socio-style' with IPSOS Ocean Indian via telephone with 1453 people stratified by class. It was a market survey and primarily concerned with delivery of services for the purpose of selling goods and for the local politicians. But this survey obviously had its limitations (information from IPSOS office in Réunion).

specially designed for this type of research. Nevertheless, after conducting the survey it became clear that Réunionnais were greatly motivated to answer the questions asked.

#### *4.11 Can one trust our findings? Criteria of validity in quantitative research.*

Public opinion is commonly measured by sample surveys. If scientifically designed and administered in a culturally sensitive manner, sample surveys are a powerful tool for revealing, among others things, the level of nationalism, the popular meaning of Réunionese identity and culture, use of the Creole language and self-definition. The current survey was both scientifically designed and administered in a culturally sensitive manner. The sample was designed based on careful procedure and the interviewers adhered to all methodological requirements necessary for these types of studies. Furthermore, the survey sample is representative of the 'national' population in key respects with characteristics of the survey sample closely matching the distribution of subgroups in Réunionese society. We are therefore confident of the accuracy of our results. The following questions require some consideration:

- How viable is creolisation as a form of local identity formation in Réunion in the face of assimilation?
- How is creolisation defined as a local identity formation phenomenon?
- How is it still possible that a Réunionese culture and identity develop?

Conducting a 'national' survey is part of the strategy deployed. My strategy is to survey a representative sample to find out their attitudes and intentions. It should be emphasised that the plural features of the Réunionese Creole society make the analysis of identity formation particularly difficult. One positive result of my work might be the prevention of racial discrimination and racist violence in this trans-ethnic and trans-cultural society which can profit from its rich diversity. These findings might also influence public opinion in various areas of social policy in the French government and local governmental institutions.

#### 4.12 *The questionnaire*

The main concern of the study is to understand the basis on which people define themselves and their own and Réunionese cultural identity. For the purposes of this analysis, it is crucial to understand the Réunionnais and their choices and decisions. The only existing survey data in this area of research is that of Lucette Labache who conducted qualitative research on ethnicity in Réunion from 1994 to 1995. My survey was designed as a 'national sample' survey and was based on the work and the design of the questionnaire of Ronan Le Coadic who studied the Breton identity between 1996 and 1998.<sup>4</sup> The same set of questions is posed to a small section of the population selected to represent the 15 to 49 year old age bracket of the population of Réunion as a whole.

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<sup>4</sup> See the questionnaire at the end of the book of Le Coadic, R. (1998). *L'identité Bretonne*. Rennes: Presse Universitaires de Rennes.

The theme of the survey was purposefully introduced to the respondents to encourage an interest in the questionnaire and give the responses more thought. The questionnaire was divided into several sections and contained seventy-one questions arranged according to nine themes:

- Social characteristics
- Cultural identity
- Creole language
- Music
- Nationalism
- Religion and death
- Ethnic definition
- Geographical Space
- Migration

I decided to restrict the thesis to the analysis of forty-five questions and the first seven themes of the questionnaire.

#### *4.13 Approach to the study and sample*

A target group born after the Second World War was selected. Using estimates of the population based on census data three segments of the sample were defined: the research instrument employed was a questionnaire containing forty-five items (mostly closed-ended and some with multi parts) that addressed seven main areas of interest. The questionnaire was divided into different sections. For instance, a section on the social background of the respondent asked general questions regarding gender, age, residential location and income.

- '30-39' and '40-49' year old groups: these individuals grew up at the beginning of Départementalisation and are interesting because they are also the Réunionese baby boom generation whom I believe are marked by the French assimilation and alienation. This target group lived and grew up in a Réunion which had changed considerably in terms of health, education, urbanisation, accommodation, roads and the welfare system. This generation also grew up during the 'Trente glorieuses'<sup>5</sup> and the effect of 'Mai 1968'.
- '15-29' year old group: this group grew up around the time of the 1975 'Petrol Crisis', the beginning of widespread unemployment. Their adolescence coincided with decentralisation policies from Paris, Europeanisation of the island and contemporary globalisation and also with the decline of the political parties advocating separatism and independence.

#### 4.14 *Pre-test*

The survey took place in several phases between 10 January and 10 September 2002. It was preceded by 14 months of preparatory work, including 3 pilot surveys.

1/ Following a review of the literature regarding survey methodology, I explored the possibility of a survey in June 2001. I participated in a conference at the University of Réunion, testing a questionnaire with 12 open questions. I also conducted some unstructured interviews. Forty nine questionnaires were returned over a one-week period. This was the first contact with the research field.

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<sup>5</sup> Trente Glorieuses: the 'Thirty Glorious' is the period from 1946 to 1976: the period of reconstruction of France after the war. It was a time of full employment, full economy, full growth and so on.

2/ In August 2001, I contacted Réunionnais migrants in France. I arranged interviews and also received some feedback by e-mail. Fourteen questionnaires were returned. In total sixty-three questionnaires were available for the pilots in Réunion and France.

3/ From these results and four focus group discussions I designed the final questionnaire with more than seventy-one questions in November 2001.

4/ Between 15 December and 9 January 2002 I tested twenty-one questionnaires and made final alterations to the survey for clarity.

#### *4.15 Profile of the interviewers*

I formed a team of seven interviewers of diverse ethnic origins and developed a training program before my team went into the field. Five of the other interviewers were also students and one was working. Apart from myself, there were three men and three women (they were my four cousins and two friends). People described me as Kaf-Malbar: a Black person with a mix of Indian and Afro-Malgache background. The other interviewers' ages and ethnic description are listed below:

##### Men:

1 Malbar, 24 years old  
1 Kaf-Petit Blanc, 17 years old (Métis)  
1 Muslim, 28 years old

##### Women:

1 Chinese-Malbar, 22 years old (Métis)  
1 Kaf, 22 years old  
1 Kaf-Petit Blanc, 25 years old (Métis)

The first questionnaires were conducted with my family and close friends and then in the public place in a relaxed, natural atmosphere.



#### 4.16 *Location of survey and methodology*

The sample was constituted from people in different locations throughout Réunion.

1/ The interviewers travelled to various public places. Questionnaires were distributed at some of the biggest shopping centres in Réunion during the weekend (three Saturdays and three Sundays in total) and during the school holiday (twelve afternoons in total): two shopping centres at St-Denis, one at St-André, one at St-Benoit, two at St-Pierre, one at St-Louis, one at Tampon, one at St-Gilles and two at St-Paul. We also went into the city centre in both shopping and pedestrian zones. We collected about **347 questionnaires** using this method.

2/ I went out on my own to meet youth in secondary schools, colleges, University classrooms and the Youth Club.<sup>6</sup> I also visited 'area clubs' and organisations, sport and meeting clubs, sport associations and the cafeteria of the Regional Council, Department Council, City Council and other administrations in all the cities of the island to meet with middle-aged individuals and conducted group interviews with the youth and middle aged people. I explained the questionnaire to them and was available to explain any misunderstood questions. This permitted me to observe respondents at the same time. I collected about **352 questionnaires** using this method.

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<sup>6</sup> CASI: Centre d'Animation Socio-Educatif and MJC: Maison des Jeunes et de la Culture.

3/ Around June 2002, I marginally but deliberately changed the order of questions of the questionnaire to test whether the responses differed.

4/ After each day of survey I calculated the balance between Gender and Age groups to be based on the INSEE official data for each commune district.

We collected questionnaires over the entire island. At the same time, from February 2002, I started to input data using the SPSS 10.0 software program.<sup>7</sup> It took an average of fifteen minutes to enter the data from each questionnaire.

**In total 699 questionnaires were collected in Réunion.**

The sample was drawn from all social occupational categories and all ethnic origins. It was designed to have a minimum of 0.01% of the total population (390 questionnaires). Before initiating the study, I completed a work plan and strategy for each stage. A randomly selected sample of 699 cases allows inferences to 'national' 15 to 49 years old populations with a margin of sampling error of no more than approximately 2.5%, or a confidence level of 95%. In other words, I am sure that 19 times out of 20, the figures reported from the sample differ by no more than 2.5 percentage points in either direction from the results that would have been obtained had we interviewed every 15 to 49 year old respondent in Réunion.

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<sup>7</sup> Renne, D. and O. Sullivan (1996). *Introducing Data Analysis for Social Scientists*. Milton Keynes: Pen University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

A multi-stage, stratified, area cluster sampling technique was used to draw a representative sample from the population, giving each Réunionnais of thinking age an equal chance of being included in the sample. The process was randomised at each stage.

The 699 interviews were conducted in 75 sites distributed across all regions: North, South, East, West, Highlands (rural area) and Lowlands (urban area) with the number of interviews in each region being proportional to the region's population size, based on the 1999 Census. Again based on the 1999 Census results, the numbers of interviews was weighted to reflect the relative population size of each commune district.

In order to make sure that women's voices were fully reflected, every second interview was with a female respondent. An equal percentage of interviews was conducted in each of the 24 commune districts.

The face-to-face interview method was chosen. Despite being a popular and expensive method of data collection, the face-to-face interview provides a data collection environment that allows a wide degree of flexibility. The flexibility allows a potentially longer, more complex interview to be conducted. The interviewer, by virtue of his or her presence, may motivate and encourage answering of the survey questions as well as probing for more complete and accurate responses. The 'personal' aspect of this data collection method can be conducive to establishing trust and building rapport to complete the response task successfully. Face-to-face

interviewing also makes use of a wide variety of visual aids to help the respondent answer the questions.<sup>8</sup>

Language is basically ambiguous and words can have a different meaning to the speaker and to the listener.<sup>9</sup> Firstly, the questionnaire was compiled in French. French is the official language of the island and is predominantly spoken by most educated Réunionnais. It is understood by everybody on the island. All 699 interviews were administered in the language of the respondent's choice (Creole or French). The results of the survey were translated into English and are presented in Chapters 4 and 5 further analysis is presented in Chapter 6. The questionnaire was developed in simple language and short sentences without too many qualifying clauses or phrases. By doing this I was trying to reduce misunderstanding of the questions by the respondents.

The 'critical analysis of the first observations'<sup>10</sup> was of decisive importance in order to delve deeper into the research. The 'field work notebook'<sup>11</sup> is the most-common recording method. This notebook was used as a 'warm/fresh recording', resulting in little loss of information. I made an 'observation plan' before the interview, 'the aim of which is to prepare and co-ordinate the next whole observation of behaviour',<sup>12</sup> that I conducted at different times and places. My conclusions are 'Educational' because I made hypotheses which I then tested

<sup>8</sup> Lyberg et al. (1991). *Survey Measurement and Process Quality*. New York: Wiley.

<sup>9</sup> Bradburn, N.M. and S. Sudman, 'The Current Status of Questionnaire Design', in Lyberg et al. (1991). *Survey Measurement and Process Quality*. New York: Wiley.

<sup>10</sup> Gimbesic, J.-C. (1996). *La Méthode en Sociologie*. Paris: La Découverte.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Bryman, A. (1992). *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Routledge.

through strategic, tactical observations and interviews. This enabled us to 'elaborate some codes, to identify the people, and their attitudes'.<sup>13</sup> The report therefore required a deontology, an objective and subjective view on my part. This research was supported by other sources, scholarly works, local publications, diverse governmental documents and media observations (TV, newspaper and radio).

#### *4.17 Difficulties encountered*

Some people took between 10 and 15 minutes to answer each questionnaire. The first challenge was to find subjects who would answer directly. It was usually necessary to explain the presentation and aims of the question. A second difficulty was encountered in questions regarding income. The final challenge was to balance the number of men and women interviewed, whilst taking age into account. Some respondents were frightened of revealing too much and of 'gossiping' regarding their responses. A maximum of transparency was preferred in this survey. I therefore had to gain the trust of the respondents. I instructed the interviewers on such issues as respect for the respondents regardless of social status and a neutral, non-judgemental attitude regarding respondents' answers. Interviewers should speak in Creole or French according to the preference of the respondents. I had to explain my work and the questionnaire to people on the street as well as in the administrations, cultural services or associations. To establish credibility I explained that I had studied in the UK, since the UK has high status (as French universities).

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<sup>13</sup> May, T. (2001). *Social research: Issues, Methods and Process*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 3rd ed.

The results of the survey would be sent abroad and there would be no direct consequences for the respondents in the short term. Interviewers took time to explain the purpose of the project to respondents and made it clear that no material would be gained by participating.

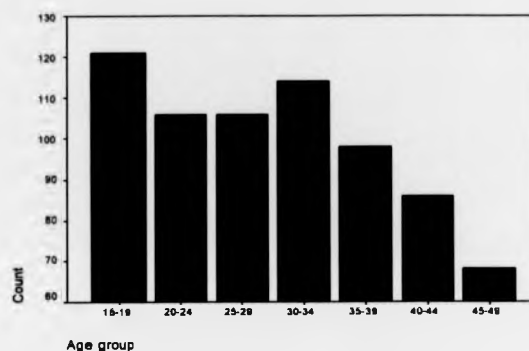
As a French Département and European territory, the infrastructure in Réunion is well developed. There were no problems of accessibility in the island: all small villages and towns are very easily accessible through an efficient system of roads.

The presentation of the results will be in the following order for each theme:

- (a) A global analysis.
- (b) Cross-tabulation with gender: Men and Women.
- (c) Cross-tabulation with age groups: 'Youth', 'Adult' and 'Older'.
- (d) Cross-tabulation with the location of residence: North, East, South and West regions.
- (e) Cross-tabulation with the High and Lowlands.
- (f) Cross-tabulation with the ethnic groups.
- (g) Cross-tabulation with monthly income.
- (h) In some cases, I will crosstabulate with other results added on additional variables.

## 4.2 Social characteristics of the sample

Figure 4.1: Age groups



In total 699 people were interviewed. In 2001 and 2002 the estimated total population was 735,000 people. The survey therefore covers 0.095% of the total population. The target group was limited to individuals between fifteen and forty-nine years old. The number of potential respondents was around 390,000. The 699 respondents interviewed therefore represented 0.18% of the targeted population. Table 4.1 below gives the Gender and Age cross-tabulation for Réunion's population according to INSEE.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Tableau l'économique de Réunion (TÉR). Edition 2001. Recensement, 1997. St-André: INSEE Réunion, p 55

**Table 4.1: Sample of Réunion's population by age group.**

Age	Men	%	Women	%	Total	Total %
15 to 19	33 090	51.1	31 630	48.9	64 720	17.2
20 to 24	28 527	50.4	28 090	49.6	56 617	15.1
25 to 29	27 055	47.1	30 442	52.9	57 497	15.3
30 to 34	30 014	49.1	31 163	50.9	61 177	16.3
35 to 39	25 741	48.5	27 324	51.5	53 065	14.2
40 to 44	22 269	48.1	24 076	51.9	46 345	12.3
45 to 49	17 560	48.6	18 560	51.4	36 120	9.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>184 256</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>191 560</b>	<b>50.9</b>	<b>375 541</b>	<b>100.0</b>

I decided to categorise the 699 respondents into three groups:

From 15 to 29 years old. As can be seen from table 4.1, 333 individuals (47.6% of the total interviewed) alleged to be in this age group. The second group ranged from 30 to 39 years old. I conclude that 212 individuals (30.4%) fell into this age group. Finally, the last group consisted of those aged from 40 to 49 years old. Therefore, the remaining 154 respondents (22.0%) were between 40 and 50 years old. Table 4.2 gives the Gender and Age cross-tabulation for my survey.

**Table 4.2: Gender and Age**

Age	Men	%	Women	%	Total	Total %
15 to 19	62	51.2	59	48.8	121	17.3
20 to 24	53	50.0	53	50.0	106	15.2
25 to 29	49	46.3	57	53.7	106	15.2
30 to 34	56	49.1	58	50.9	114	16.3
35 to 39	48	48.9	50	51.1	98	14.0
40 to 44	42	48.9	44	51.1	86	12.3
45 to 49	33	48.5	35	51.5	68	9.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>50.9</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>100.0</b>



Figure 4.2: Gender



From the data, 343 persons (49.1%) are men and 356 (50.9%) are women. In Réunion's Census (1999) women represent about 50.9% of the target population in this island and therefore men represent 49.1%.

The following figure represents a break-down of respondents in terms of gender and age.

Figure 4.3: Respondents

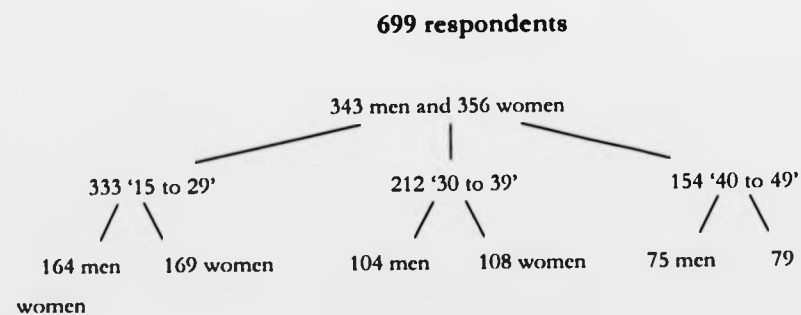


Table 4.3 gives the samples' area of residence.

Table 4.3: The area of residence

Town	Frequency	INSEE %	My survey %
<b>North</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>22.5</b>
St-Denis	131	18.6	18.7
Ste-Marie	26	3.8	3.7
<b>East</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>17.7</b>
Ste-Suzanne	19	2.6	2.7
St-Andre	44	6.2	6.3
Salazie	8	1.1	1.1
Bras-Panon	10	1.4	1.4
St-Benoit	32	4.5	4.6
Plaine-Des-Palmistes	4	0.5	0.6
Ste-Rose	7	0.9	1.0
<b>South</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>34.5</b>
St-Philippe	5	0.7	0.7
St-Joseph	29	4.3	4.1
St-Pierre	68	9.8	9.7
Tampon	58	8.5	8.3
St-Louis	44	6.2	6.3
Etang-Sale	11	1.7	1.6
Entre-Deux	5	0.8	0.7
Pette-Ile	8	1.4	1.2
Cilaos	6	0.9	0.9
Les Avirons	7	1.0	1.0
<b>West</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>25.3</b>
St-Leu	25	3.6	3.6
Trois-Bassin	6	0.9	0.9
St-Paul	86	12.4	12.3
Le Port	38	5.4	5.4
La Possession	13	3.1	1.9
Mafate (La Possession)	9	0.4	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It has always been said that there is extreme diversity in Réunion in terms of location. Réunionese tradition is purported to reside mainly in the Highlands or in the South in the popular memory. In conducting the questionnaire in all regions and cities, it will be possible to ascertain whether differences exist between the target groups. First of all, we have divided the island into four micro-regions: North, South, East and West. On the one hand it can be seen that the North of the island, with 22.5% of the total respondents, and the South with 34.5% of the total, is fairly well balanced.

On the other hand, it is observable that the West of the island with 25.3% of the total respondents and the East with 17.7% of the total, are quite unbalanced. 84.7% of the respondents live in the Lowlands and 15.3% live in the Highlands.<sup>15</sup>

Figure 4.4 and Table 4.4 below presents the monthly income of the respondents.

**Figure 4.4: Monthly income**



**Table 4.4: Monthly Income by family**

Income	Valid %
Less than 750 €	11.7
751 to 1500 €	26.8
1501 to 2300 €	16.2
2301 to 3050 €	13.2
3051 to 4580 €	9.3
4581 to 6100 €	4.5
More than 6100 €	2.4
No Answer	15.8
Total	100.0

<sup>15</sup> According to INSEH, 86.8% for Lowlands and 13.2% for Highlands. But the population of Mafate (Highland in this survey with 1.3% of the respondents) forms part of the administrative territory of La Possession which is a Lowland.

Monthly income was given in term of French francs since the survey was conducted prior to the introduction of Euro currency on 1 January 2002. The pie charts do not reveal the nature of real income in some cases. Unfortunately, I surmise that some people did not want to reveal their true incomes. In some cases they pretended to earn less than they actually do, afraid to reveal their true earnings publicly. Nevertheless, in some cases the figures are accurate.

Table 4.5 below presents the sample by ethnic group definition of the respondents, which mirrors the population at large for this survey.

**Table 4.5: How do you define yourself?**

How do you define yourself?	Frequency	Valid %
Kaf	158	23.5
Zarab	28	4.2
Zorey	74	11.0
Comorien	7	1.0
Malbar	99	14.7
Petit Blanc	96	14.3
Métis	135	20.1
Malgache	5	0.7
Chinois	28	4.2
Gros Blanc	17	2.5
Mahorais	7	1.0
Others	19	2.8
Total	673	100.0

We had more or less the same percentage as my estimate presented in Chapter 1.

#### 4.3 Qualitative survey

During my fieldwork I also participated in the meetings of some cultural associations in Réunion and conducted informal interviews to gain information regarding their activities. On completion of my fieldwork, I continued to follow their actions through daily news on the internet until the end of the thesis-writing process. I pay particular attention to some of these cultural associations which have presented political and cultural alternatives to the State. Those eighteen groups which might loosely be described as cultural activists sharing a common ideology are the following:

1/ **Ankraké**: Association created in 1995 which promotes public debate on the Réunionese cultural identity. They also promote symbolic actions in commemoration of slavery and other events during the year. They are based in the South part of Réunion and operate mainly in the South, West and North of the island. All the ethnic groups are represented in Ankraké. They have about 100 members and about 300 people take part in their demonstrations. This information was provided by: Eric Allendroit, the General Secretary of the association of Kaf background.

2/ **Art Sénik**: Association created in 1991, Art Sénik offers a place where aspiring artists can expose their works. They are based in the West part of Réunion and their operations are mainly restricted to this region of the island. All ethnic groups are represented, with a large number of Zorey. They have about twenty

members and about 200 people take part in their actions. This information was given to me by Sophie Rotbart, the founder of the association, a Zorey individual.

3/ **Capitaine Dimitile:** Association created in 1998. Dimitile was a slave who escaped the plantation and went to live in the Highlands. This association promotes the valorisation of the Highlands, as well as the relationship between the Highlands and the Maroons. They are based in the South and operate mainly in this area. The majority of members are Petit Blanc. Capitaine Dimitile has about fifty members and about 300 people take part in their actions. This information was provided by: Louis Dijoux, President and founder of the association, Petit Blanc.

4/ **Cimendef:** Association founded in 1984. Cimendef was a slave who escaped the plantation and went up to the Highlands. He was one of the great leaders of the group of Maroons. This association is one of the oldest cultural associations. It began as an anti-colonialist cultural association and now promotes traditional Réunionese music and history and the construction of traditional instruments. Cimendef is based in the East of Réunion and operates mainly in this region. Its membership mainly represents the Malbar, Méüs and Kaf ethnic groups. The group has about thirty members and can move about 100 people to action. This information was given to me by Serge Sinamalé, (ex-independentist), President and founder of the association, Malbar.

5/ **Espace Afrique:** Association created in 1995 which promotes the valorisation of the Kaf and Africa and debate on the question of the Kaf in the public sphere. They are based in the North and operate mainly in this region. All the ethnic groups are represented with a strong Kaf contingent. The group has about 150 members and about 200 people take part in their demonstrations. This information was provided by Gilbert Annette, Kaf (member) and Rose-Marie Var, the founder and ex-President of the association, Kaf.

6/ **Grand Mere Kal:** Association created in 1993 which promotes the Réunionese cultural actions through folk tales, legends and traditional theatre mainly through the oral medium. The association is based in the West and operates throughout the island. All the ethnic groups are represented. They have about ten members and about fifty people are involved in their demonstrations. This information was provided by Ketty Sabadell, founder and now employed by the association, founder.

7/ **Lanzistisman:** Movement created in 2001 which is a political grouping of all the cultural associations to contest certain political decisions and call for demonstrations in the streets (for instance against French political party National Front Jean-Marie Le Pen's impending visit to Réunion). The movement works on the question of financial and psychological reparation. All the cultural associations that I investigated are members of the Lanzistisman movement. The association is based in the South and operates throughout the

island. All the ethnic groups are represented. This information was provided by Eddy Babet, Kaf, English spokesperson and Younouss Ahamed, Métis, French spokesperson.

8/ **Met Ansam**: Association created in 1999, Met Ansam publishes the only bi-monthly magazine in Creole language, *Nout Lang* (Our language) to valorise the language as well as the Réunionese identity, culture and literature. They also provide a library specialising in Creole literature. They are based in the South of Réunion but operate throughout the island. All the ethnic groups are represented with a strong Petit Blanc contingent. They have about ten members and about fifty people are involved in their demonstrations. This information was provided by Frederic Célestin, Yab, employed by the association and chief editor of the magazine *Nout Lang*.

8/ **Mouvman pou la Rekonesans de Lidantite Kiltirel Renyone**: Association created in 1997 which promotes the cultural identity of the Réunionnais and particularly the Creole language. They are based in the South part of the island and operate mainly in the South, West and North of the island. A political party branch of the association was formed in 2002 known as the *Parti Réunionnais*, and also includes members of other cultural associations. The MRICR (or MRI.KR) produces a Creole language sticker and has a very strong relationship with several cultural activist associations in Martinique and Guadeloupe as well as Breton, Basque and Corsican associations. All the ethnic groups are



represented in the association. The MRICR has the most media coverage in Réunion. It has about 150 members and about 300 people are involved in its demonstrations. This information was provided by: Michael Crochet, Métis, founder and President of the association.

10/ **Mouvement Kaf:** Movement created in 2002 which promotes the culture and religion of the Kaf group. They are based in the East part of Réunion and operate mainly in this region. Mainly the Kaf ethnic group is represented among its members. They have about fifty members and about 100 people are involved in their demonstrations. This information was provided by: Jean-René Dreinaza, Kaf, leader and spokesperson of the movement.

12/ **Radyo Pikan:** A radio broadcast created in 1982, which promotes and valorises Creole music with an anti-colonialist ideology. They are based in the South and operate mainly in the South and West of the island. Radyo Pikan and Met Ansam share premises for meetings and have the same leadership. They have also created a political party called *Parnoumim*. All ethnic groups are represented with a large number of Petit Blanc members. They have about fifty members and about 100 people are involved in their demonstrations. My source for this information was Bertrand Grondin, Petit Blanc, President of the association.

9/ **Rasin Kaf:** Association created in 1997 which promotes the Kaf cultural identity, the question of reparation and all actions regarding slavery. They are based in the West, but operate throughout the island. Their membership is predominantly Kaf. They have about fifty members and can move about 200 people to action. Ghislaine Beyssiere, founder and President of the association, kaf and Phillipe Beyssiere, founder and General Secretary of the association provided me with this information, Zorey.

13/ **Soubik Zerbaz:** Association founded in 2001 which contributes to the cultural, economic and social blossoming of people living in the city of St-Louis. They are based in the South, operating mainly in the city of St-Louis. All ethnic groups are represented in their membership. They have about 10 members and can move about 50 people to action. Laurent Julie, founder and President of the association, Métis, was my source for this information.

14/ **Centre Culturel Regional Indien:** Association founded in 1998, originally the 'Centre Tamoul de Ste-Marie' created in 1983. This centre promotes the Tamil culture and Hindu religion. They are based in the North and operate in the North and East of the island. Only the Malbar ethnic group distribution is represented. They have about 300 members and can move about 1,000 people to action. Moutanaick Latchimy, Malbar, employed by the Centre and Krishna Narayanin, Malbar, founder of the Centre provided me with this information.

**15/ Fédération Réunionnaise des Associations Culturelles Chinoises:**

Association created in 1999 which attempts to provide a unified voice to the Chinese cultural associations. They are based in the North, but operate throughout the island. They have about 800 members and can move about 1,500 people to action. Clement Ah-Line, Chinois, President of the Federation provided this information.

**16/ Groupement Inter-Religieux:** Association created in 2001 just after the

terrorist attack of 11 September in New York. This group attempts to promote peace and fraternity between religions and communities. They aim to promote the 'peaceful' community present in Réunion around the world. Al Jazeera, the Quatarian TV broadcaster has reported on their work. All ethnic groups are represented. They are based in the North part of Réunion but operate throughout the island. They have about 100 members and can move about 5,000 to 10,000 people to peaceful actions. Idriis Banian, Zarab, spokesperson of the movement provided this information.

**17/ Association Musulmane de La Réunion:** Association created in 1995 which

promotes the Muslim culture in Réunion. They are based in the North part of Réunion and operate throughout the island. Mainly the Zarab ethnic group is represented. They have about 350 members and can move about 1,500 people to action. Rabiât Badat, Zarab, General Secretary of the association provided this information.

18/ **Maison de Mayotte:** Association created in 1997 which promotes the Mahorais culture. This association is playing an interface role between the local authorities and the migrated Mahorais population in Réunion for a better integration. Their actions are mainly administrative. They are based in the North and their actions cover the entire island. Only the Mahorais ethnic group is represented. They have about 200 members and can move about 1,000 people to action. Said Ali, Mahorais, President of the association supplied this information.

Most of these associations share the Left wing political ideology (PS and PCR). All of them are linked with the politics in Réunion but do not carry any weight in the local election at the moment.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately during my fieldwork I did not find any cultural associations connected with the Right wing political party. These eighteen associations meet about twice a week and have one action per month depending on current political happenings. I chose these associations due to the fact that they have the most media coverage in Réunion. These cultural activist associations do not speak in a single voice and are not a united force. However we can notice a connection between some associations in terms of their objectives:

#### **Valorisation of Creole and Réunionese cultural identity**

Ankraké, Art Sénik, Capitaine Dimitile, Espace Afrique, Grand Mere Kal, Mouvement Kaf, Rasin Kaf and Soubik Zerbaz.

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<sup>16</sup> Less than 2.0% according the parliamentary election in June 2002.

**Radical Creole and Réunionese cultural identity and political movements:**

Cimendef, Lanzistisman, Met Ansam, Mouvman po lo Respe Lidantite Kiltirel  
Renyone and Radyo Pikan.

**Valorisation of relative religion and culture**

Centre Culturel Régional Indien, Fédération Réunionnaise des Associations  
Culturelles Chinoises, Groupement Inter-Religieux, Association Musulmane de La  
Réunion and Maison de Mayotte.

However all the groups valorise both Creole and Réunionese cultural identity  
both religious identity and ethnic identity. The analysis of these cultural  
associations will be develop in Chapter 6 and 7.

The following section will go on to develop the analysis of the results of the  
questionnaire.

**4.4 The question of Réunionese cultural identity**

It is universally acknowledged that Réunion has a particular identity. This identity is  
different from that of its motherland, France. In this section I attempted to gauge  
whether the results of the questionnaire confined a difference between a French  
and Réunionese cultural identity.

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, I undertook several pre-  
survey interviews after the MA dissertation in June, July, August, November and

December 2001 with 12 open questions. I then documented the most frequent response choices, with the following results:

Let us ask what it means to be Réunionnais for people living on the island.

**Table 4.6: What does it mean to you to be a Réunionnais?** <sup>17</sup> (in %)

1. To be born in Réunion	78.3
2. To have parents born in Réunion	54.1
3. To live in Réunion	44.6
4. To have a Réunionese cultural identity	34.9
5. To have a Réunionese tradition	33.6
6. To speak Creole	22.2
7. French born or living in Réunion	19.2

First, for the great majority of people to be Réunionnais means 'to be born in Réunion'; followed in second place by 'to have parents born in Réunion'. This is the most frequent response for all the age categories. It is important to note that the notion of territory and geographical space is very important in the definition of what it means to be a Réunionnais. To be born, or to have parents born, in Réunion functions as an 'umbilical cord' between the island and the people. The '30-39' group places more importance on this answer in the cross-table. Territory or geographical space is very important in terms of identity, which is often associated with the 'natural' symbols of Réunion such as the volcano, mountains and beaches. This shows that place of birth is very important. Réunionese people identify with a particular reference to territory by placing 'to live in Réunion' in third position. The most important category for this answer was the 'Youth' group.

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<sup>17</sup> Best first, second and third position result.

'To have a Réunionese cultural identity' was placed in the middle of all the choices. One shall see in the next part how those who were surveyed classified Réunionese cultural identity. This is followed by 'to have a Réunionese tradition' and 'to speak Creole', which were placed in the penultimate two positions in the table. Is it because the Creole language is stigmatised? Finally, last in the table was 'being French born or living in Réunion'. The fact that all Réunionnais also have French nationality can make a difference between nationality, identity and culture.

**Table 4.7: What does it means to be Réunionnais? / Gender and Age group <sup>18</sup> (%)**

	Men	Women	15-29	30-39	40-49
1. To be born in Réunion	76.7	79.8	79.3	75.5	79.9
2. To have parents born in Réunion	52.2	55.8	52.6	57.1	53.2
3. To live in Réunion	45.2	44.1	48.0	41.0	42.2
4. To have a Réunionese cultural identity	34.4	35.4	<b>33.3</b>	37.8	34.4
5. To have a Réunionese tradition	32.9	34.2	<b>35.1</b>	33.5	30.5
6. To speak Creole	24.5	<b>19.9</b>	25.2	19.8	<b>18.9</b>
7. French born or living in Réunion	17.8	<b>20.5</b>	17.4	18.4	<b>26.6</b>

There is no difference between the male and female groups. Also, age seems to be of little importance on the question of speaking Creole, which is placed last in the table for the 30-39, 40-49. It is also relevant for the female group. One also notices that the percentage who consider it relevant 'to speak Creole', compared with the general average, is higher among men than women and among the 15-29 than it is for the 30-39 and 40-49 groups.

<sup>18</sup> Best first, second and third position result.

Let us look next at how the people of Réunion interpret being French.

**Table 4.8: What does it mean to you being French?** <sup>19</sup> (%)

1. To have French nationality	67.0
2. To be born in metropolitan France	60.1
3. To have a French cultural identity	45.1
4. To speak French	44.5
5. To have a French tradition	43.1
6. To have parents born in metropolitan France	42.6
7. To live in metropolitan France	34.5
8. To be French born or to live in metropolitan France	29.3

These results appear to contradict those of the previous table. 'To have French nationality' is the most important indicator. The respondents seem to be or want to be French to the same extent as a French person in metropolitan France. 'To be born in metropolitan France' being afforded second place may imply that the French metropolitans are 'more French' than the Réunionnais.

This means that the French born individuals living in Réunion compared feel that theirs is a different identity from that of a metropolitan French person. This could be the expression of a feeling that those who are not born in France are not really French, or are second layer French. The appearance of 'to speak French' in fourth place could result from French, rather than Creole, being the official language in both France and Réunion. To speak French is to have access to institutions like schools, the administration or army and it is a link with the outside world. However, it could also be taken to mean that the French language is not the Réunionnais' mother tongue and that for them speaking French or being French is a

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<sup>19</sup> Best first, second, third and fourth position result.



handicap. Third 'to have a French cultural identity' and fifth 'to have a French tradition' are indicators of the importance placed on cultural values.

'To have parents born in metropolitan France', 'to live in metropolitan France' and 'to be French born or to live in Réunion' appear last, again contrary to earlier findings. Notions of territory and geographical space are less important in a Réunionnais definition of being French. This may be due to Réunion's position as a 'French island' 10,000 kilometres away from its capital city Paris. For all except the 15-20 year age group 'To live in France' appeared first in the table! This could mean that they do not feel entirely French and are more conscious of their Réunionnais identity. It is interesting that they could perceive this difference and stress the salience of place first, followed by 'being born in France' which is in last position, as in the previous table. For the youth, place *jus soli* is more important than blood *jus sanguinis*, but the latter becomes more important as people age. The definition of being 'French' is a definition to represent the Zorey in Réunion.

We notice that the notions of territory and heritage are very important to the Réunionnais people. Rights based on territory and rights based on blood are similarly valued in effect a mix between the French concept of identity and the German concept of citizenship. They also incorporate notions of territory for Africans and Malgaches and of blood for Indians and Chinese. This notion of territory can refer both to the French conception of *jus soli* and to a Malgache or Comorien born in Réunion being considered Réunionnais? This brings us to another side of the question: can a Zorey born in Réunion be Réunionnais? Here

again we see a mix between the French and German conceptions of *jus sanguinis*: you are Réunionnais if you were born on the island and if your parents were born there. The transgenerational analysis is interesting in that one can notice that the 'elderly' attach more importance to the location of birth, the '30-39' group places more importance on parents being born in Réunion and the 'youth' group attaches more importance to living in Réunion. Does this mean that the 'youth' are more likely to accept the Comorien, the Mahorais, the Malgache and the Zorey in Réunion and to consider them Réunionnais?

On the other hand, it is observable that nationality, language and tradition are the most important components of a French identity in the table. The cultural aspect is the most important to a Réunionnais definition of being French, especially of citizenship. This could be seen as a demand to have the same status as the mainland, which is different from being a Réunionnais in which the territory is first and the cultural part second. This is clearly the effect of the cultural assimilation and alienation that Départementalisation has imposed on the Réunionese people. Its geographical distance from metropolitan France denies the Réunionese populace ready access to French cultural values. Réunion is French because its population has a feeling of belonging to the French nation and it defines itself as Réunionnais because that is the fact and reality. It might be interesting in the future to compare this result with another survey that could be conducted among Réunionnais living in France. In this result, unsurprisingly one sees that the French language is more

valued than the Creole language, which puts it first in the public sphere and second in the private sphere.

The most sensible conclusion one can come to is that to be Réunionnais is a mix between the place of birth and a cultural identity. To be French, citizenship is definitely more significant. When people are young, *jus soli* is more important while later *jus sanguinis* becomes more important. Ultimately, it must be acknowledged that Réunion is not France and France is not Réunion. Réunionnais can be French but French (or others) cannot be Réunionnais. In other words: a Réunionnais citizen is Réunionnais by practice in the private sphere and they are French in an imaginary sense and in the public sphere.

Let us see next what respondents think it means to have a Réunionese cultural identity.

**Table 4.9: For you Réunionese cultural identity is... <sup>20</sup> (%)**  
(in order of rank)

1. Its tradition	81.8
2. Its Creole language	74.1
3. Its history	72.7
4. Its métissage	64.1
5. Its values	56.2
6. Its gastronomy	34.8
7. Its music	32.3
9. Its beliefs	26.6
9. Its education	17.0
10. Its literature	11.3

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<sup>20</sup> Best first, second, third, fourth and fifth position result.

Table 4.9 shows, tradition is ranked first among the ten different possible answers. Tradition is the heritage transmitted from the parents or ancestors to the succeeding generations. The great respect for family values helps to explain why tradition is placed first. Tradition is very important for all generations, but especially for the 41-45 age groups where 95.2% feel that tradition is the most important aspect of cultural identity. Réunionnais are very conscious of their ethnic origin and believe in an existing Réunionese tradition, and cultural identity. Next ranked is 'the Creole language'. The Creole language is the second most important factor for all age groups except 36-45 year olds where it drops to third position. It is interesting to note that within the 15-35 age group the Creole language is more important than the average level. Réunionese history is ranked in third place and surprisingly the percentage of 31-45 year olds assigning this rank is much higher than those under 30 years old.

This result is surprising, since the history of Réunion has only been taught in schools as of five years ago. More information has been available in the media over this period. 'Métissage' is placed in fourth position as informing Réunionese cultural identity. It seems as if that has been generalised and has become part of cultural patrimony. By ranking métissage in fourth position Réunionnais praise métissage as a natural element of their culture and identity for the 'youth'.<sup>21</sup> Values are ranked after métissage in fifth position. The youth, and especially the 15-20 year olds have less regard for Réunionese values than the other age groups. This could

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<sup>21</sup> See also the work of Labache, L. (1997).

be explained as part of an 'adolescent crisis' stage. In sixth position is 'gastronomy'. The 15-20 and 41-45 year old groups rank 'gastronomy' higher. This could signify the rediscovery and the revalorisation of the 'Cuisine Lontan' ('Old Cuisine': the food of the ancestors). Music, in seventh position, is also very important for the youth and less for the older groups. This could be explained by the media coverage of Baster, Danyel Waro and other groups in recent years. Réunionese music is current in everyday life in Réunion and therefore forms part of the collective consciousness of the youth. This is in contrast with the elderly groups who grew up when this 'national music' was stigmatised and repressed by the French authorities. 'Education' and 'beliefs' are in eighth and ninth position. Judging from the fact that 'literature' is ranked in the last four it would appear that writers are not representative of Réunionese cultural identity. However, more and more writers are creating a Réunionese literature.

Table 4.10: Réunionese cultural identity / Regions cross-tabulation <sup>22</sup> (%)

	North	East	South	West
1. Its tradition	82.2	85.5	83.7	87.2
2. Its Creole language	79.6	75.8	77.2	<b>68.9</b>
3. Its history	72.6	70.2	73.1	<b>75.1</b>
4. Its métissage	66.2	70.2	67.5	64.2
5. Its values	54.8	54.8	66.1	61.9
6. Its gastronomy	36.3	37.9	30.1	40.1
7. Its music	35.7	<b>32.3</b>	31.0	28.3
8. Its beliefs	26.1	<b>33.9</b>	22.1	24.3
9. Its education	15.9	<b>11.3</b>	21.4	18.9
10. Its literature	11.5	<b>13.7</b>	12.0	11.1

<sup>22</sup> Best first, second, third, fourth and fifth position result.

One can see a slight difference between the East and the other regions in the last four categories in the table. The West ranks history higher than the Creole language. Music is placed after beliefs in contrast with the general average. Many Gros Blanc and Zorey live in the West coastal region of Réunion. This may account for the ranking of Creole language and history.

**Table 4.11: Réunionese cultural identity / High and Lowlands Cross-tabulation <sup>23</sup> (%)**

	Lowland	Highland
1. Its tradition	82.1	80.4
2. Its Creole language	73.8	75.7
3. Its history	70.1	70.0
4. Its métissage	64.4	62.6
5. Its values	56.6	54.2
6. Its gastronomy	35.5	30.9
7. Its music	33.1	28.0
9. Its beliefs	27.0	24.3
9. Its education	16.0	22.4
10. Its literature	11.3	11.0

There are no substantial differences in results obtained for the Low and Highlands in terms of Réunionese cultural identity.

**Table 4.12: Réunionese cultural identity / Gender and Age Group Cross-tabulation <sup>24</sup> (%)**

	Men	Women	Young	Adult	Elderly
1. Its tradition	82.2	81.5	83.8	77.8	83.1
2. Its Creole language	75.8	<b>72.5</b>	76.9	<b>70.8</b>	<b>72.7</b>
3. Its history	68.8	<b>76.4</b>	70.6	<b>83.1</b>	<b>76.6</b>
4. Its métissage	61.8	66.3	65.8	63.7	<b>61.0</b>
5. Its values	56.9	55.6	55.3	56.6	<b>57.8</b>
6. Its gastronomy	34.7	34.8	<b>36.0</b>	28.8	36.4
7. Its music	32.4	32.3	<b>38.4</b>	27.4	25.9
9. Its beliefs	25.4	27.8	26.4	28.3	24.7
9. Its education	17.8	16.3	13.2	21.2	19.5
10. Its literature	13.7	9.0	10.8	13.2	9.7

<sup>23</sup> Best first, second, third, fourth and fifth position result.

<sup>24</sup> Best first, second, third, fourth and fifth position result.

In this table, several differences are evident, especially regarding the Creole language. These differences occur not only between males and females but also between the 15-29, 30-39 and 40-49 groups. The female 30-39 and 40-49 groups place history before the Creole language. The elderly group feel that values are more important than métissage while the female 30-39 and 40-49 groups value métissage much more than the others do. One important difference is that unlike the 30-39 and 40-49 groups, the youth value Réunionese music more than Réunionese gastronomy.

Next we examine views of the French cultural identity in Réunion.

**Table 4.13: What does French cultural identity mean to you? <sup>25</sup> (%)**

1. Its French language	74.1
2. Its history	73.4
3. Its tradition	68.0
4. Its values	57.9
5. Its ethnic origins	36.2
6. Its literature	34.0
7. Its education	30.9
8. Its gastronomy	25.0
9. Its music	25.0
10. Its beliefs	18.9

'French language' was placed here before French history. One can see here the effect of the symbolic clash with the official language in the public sphere. Not only are administrative and political activities conducted in French but so too it is the language of the media and all official speech. The fact that there are three kinds of white people in Réunion (Petit Blanc, Gros Blanc and Zorey) is also a factor.

<sup>25</sup> Best first, second, third, fourth and fifth position results.

The Zorey express their cultural identity through the French language. French is considered much more important among the 26-40 year-old group and of above average importance for the 46-50 year-old group. 'History' was also regarded as very important by Réunionnais in describing French cultural identity. There is only a 0.7% difference between 'French language' and 'history'. 'Tradition', which is third in the table, is more important for the over 41 year-olds, but less so for the Réunionese cultural identity. This is hardly surprising since Réunionnais live far from the mainland and are unfamiliar with French traditions. In fourth position we find French 'values'. Here tradition is more important in the 40-49 than in the 15-29 groups, which is quite similar to the result for Réunionese 'values'. However, this view of French cultural identity could be the same in different parts of the world. France has always tried to express and impose its culture through the French language. What is interesting about 'ethnic origins', placed halfway down the table, is that they are definitely much more important to the under 30 age group and far less important to the over 30 age group. Returning to the previous table, one notice the same applying to 'métissage' between generations. Could one infer from this that the 15-29 generation see ethnicity as a more important component of identity?

With regard to the second part of this table, one sees that 'literature' is placed in sixth position whereas in the previous table it is last. Here one also notices the effect of symbolic violence on schools and newspapers, namely the effect of the great French philosophers and scientists who are recognised throughout the world.



'Education' is in seventh position and 'gastronomy' in eighth place. Though French food has an excellent reputation throughout the world, Réunionnais consider their food as different from and sometimes better than French food, with the use of spices making all the difference. 'Beliefs' appears last in this table because there are fewer religious people in France and among those who represent French cultural identity in Réunion, ie. the Zorey. This may be why Réunionnais placed it last, if compared with the previous table where 'beliefs' is third from. It is well known that Réunionnais are avid believers.

**Table 4.14: For you what best represents France in Réunion? <sup>26</sup> (%)**

1. French flag	82.7
2. Administration	75.0
3. Préfecture	68.1
4. Status and law	57.7
5. French language	55.4
6. School	46.4
7. Gendarme/police	43.5
8. Civil Servants	37.5
9. Zorey	24.3
10. Military	24.2
11. Media	15.2

The position of the flag at the top of the list shows a very strong sense of allegiance to France. The flag is taken to mean that the island belongs to France and it is seen everywhere. The next two responses in the table represent French institutions. These affect all Réunionnais in that they have to deal with such administrative issues as taxes, job centres and social security. The Préfecture represents the

<sup>26</sup> Best first, second, third, fourth and fifth position.

French authorities and is supported by police officers along with France's representative on the island—the Préfet. All demonstrations that take place in Réunion are held in front of the Préfecture in the capital. People demonstrate outside this colonial building to make their disapproval known. 'Status and law', in fourth position, is a part of everyday life. It has recently been made evident how passionate Réunionese politicians and inhabitants can become over the question of the status of Réunion since 1946, when Départementalisation was introduced, and over attempts to reinforce the French Republican regime. The 'Law' covers the French Court, its magistrates and judges, as well as other things like the Highway Code.

The first and only cultural identity distinction is the 'French language', which is logical given that it was placed first in Table 4.14 on French cultural identity. French is the official language in all public spheres, including the media, schools and the University. 'School' is not in sixth position after 'language' by chance. School, as the representative of knowledge is the best vehicle through which to learn and introduce French culture, civil education and history. If we focus on the first part of table 4.14, France is represented in the island's institutions. The latter part of table 4.14 focuses on the administrators and the people who work in these institutions. In seventh position are the *gendarme*,<sup>27</sup> police employed by the French

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<sup>27</sup> Gendarme act in the rural area and Police in the urban area. Amongst the police forces there are the Municipal Police (City Council) and National Police forces (Home office Ministry). Gendarme forms part of the Defence Ministry.

government to ensure that the laws are respected and observed. Civil servants were placed eighth in response to this question.

In Réunion, the Zorey represent the civil servants. They are the ones who ensure that French institutions function. The Zorey are the white French who first came to work as civil servants on the island in the 1950s. The military, in tenth place, are very discreet. They are visible on Bastille Day on 14 July and at other official ceremonies involving the Préfet and other members of government from France or Réunion. The French military are not active. As in East Africa or Djibouti they initiate few manoeuvres. Their only real purpose is to control the Indian Ocean and Middle East with satellite relays. Finally, the media were placed last in the table since they only provide local and regional news.

**Table 4.15: For you what best represents France in Réunion? <sup>28</sup> (%)**

	Men	Women	15-29	30-39	40-49
1. French flag	80.2	81.1	79.9	81.9	82.5
2. Administration	74.9	75.0	77.5	67.3	79.9
3. Préfecture	69.7	66.6	65.2	65.7	71.4
4. Status and Law	57.1	<b>58.1</b>	57.1	49.1	59.7
5. French language	51.1	<b>59.6</b>	54.3	44.6	56.5
6. School	46.1	46.6	43.4	36.0	52.3
7. Gendarme/police	<b>48.7</b>	38.5	41.8	35.9	43.5
8. Civil Servants	37.3	37.6	37.7	31.0	34.4
9. Zorey	<b>24.0</b>	24.7	28.9	<b>20.2</b>	<b>16.2</b>
10. Military	<b>27.4</b>	21.1	25.3	<b>22.7</b>	<b>19.5</b>
11. Media	13.4	16.9	17.0	11.6	11.7

<sup>28</sup> Best first, second, third, fourth and fifth position.

It is surprising to see the military in tenth place because it represents France more than the Zorey do in Réunion. One can see that men attach more importance than other categories to those bodies that represent law enforcement. Language is important for women, but here again they see it as more important than Status and Law. There are not too many differences in results between age groups. The 30-39 and 40-49 groups feel the military represent France in Réunion more than the Zorey. This could be explained by the fact that only since 1998 has military service not been obligatory in France. For the 40-49 generation and for the men, military service was something you had to do to fulfil your duty as a male.

**Table 4.16: Do you ever discuss Réunionese politics?**

	Frequency	Valid %
1 time per day	84	12.6
1 to 2 times per week	133	20.0
1 time per month	176	26.4
1 to 2 times per year	273	41.0
Total	666	100.0

As one can see from Table 4.16, 41% of the population discuss Réunionese politics only once or twice a year. This percentage is slightly lower than the number of abstentions during elections. Some 26.4% of those surveyed discuss politics about once a month; while 20.0% discuss it once or twice a week. Finally, 12.6% claimed to discuss Réunionese politics on a daily basis.

One can see that political debate is rare among most of the people who answered the survey. It would appear to be taboo to talk about politics. I had some

difficulty eliciting the voting intentions of most of them, with people unwilling to say for whom they voted. Everyone in Réunion is aware of the fervency of emotions during elections, which sometimes result in injuries or even deaths. People are afraid of discussing their political allegiances in public, or even in the family. Another contribution's factor is that people are simply disinterested in politics or feel that they are too uninformed to discuss it.

**Table 4.17: With whom do you talk about this subject? <sup>29</sup>**

Clubs/associations/friends	72.8
Home/family	75.5
Work	71.1
Tourist	17.6
Café/bar	15.9
In France	10.7

We notice that there is a high percentage difference between the first three and last three categories, which suggests that such discussions are confined to closed associations in which there is greater trust.

**Table 4.18: Do you ever discuss the question of Réunionese cultural identity?**

	Frequency	Valid %
1 time per day	76	11.3
1 to 2 times per week	157	23.4
1 time per month	199	29.7
1 to 2 times per year	238	35.5
Total	670	100.0

<sup>29</sup> Best first, second and third best position.

There are not many fundamental differences between the results of Tables 4.16 and 4.18. Referring to these percentages, it becomes clear that slightly fewer discuss Réunionese cultural identity at least once a day, with 23.4% discussing identity and culture once or twice a week and 29.7% discussing it once or twice a month—3.4% more than those who discuss politics. Finally, nearly 35.5% of the people who discuss cultural identity in this survey said that they did it once or twice a year. It becomes apparent that politics is discussed less frequently than cultural identity.

**Table 4.19: Age Group and Gender / Do you ever discuss the question of Réunionese cultural identity?**

	Men	Women	15-29	30-39	40-49
1 time per day	13.9	11.3	11.8	13.0	13.8
1 to 2 times per week	23.2	16.7	16.8	23.4	20.0
1 time per month	25.1	27.8	26.2	23.5	31.0
1 to 2 times per year	37.8	44.2	45.2	41.0	31.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Cultural identity is discussed much more by men than by women and informants in the 40-49 age group are more likely to discuss the subject. The question of Réunionese cultural identity is discussed less frequently amongst the 15-29 age group and amongst women.

**Table 4.20: Highlands and lowlands / Do you ever discuss the question of Réunionese cultural identity? (%)**

	Lowlands	Highlands	Total
1 a day	11.9	16.3	12.6
1 to 2 times per day	19.8	21.2	20.0
1 to 2 times per month	27.4	21.2	26.4
1 to 2 times per year	40.9	41.3	41.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to Table 4.20 people in the Highlands discuss the question of cultural identity more frequently than people from the Lowlands.

**Table 4.21: Do you ever listen to or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television? / Do you ever discuss the question of Réunionese cultural identity? (%)**

<i>Listen to/watch</i> <b>Cultural identity</b>	<b>1 time per day</b>	<b>1 to 2 times per week</b>	<b>1 time per month</b>	<b>1 to 2 times per year</b>	<b>Do not watch/listen to programmes in Creole</b>
1 time per day	25.5	11.4	8.5	4.0	7.9
1 to 2 times per week	27.0	24.8	16.9	9.3	9.0
1 time per month	24.8	28.6	26.9	25.3	23.6
1 to 2 times per year	22.7	35.2	47.7	61.3	59.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The subjects who are concerned with Réunionese cultural identity often listen to or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television.

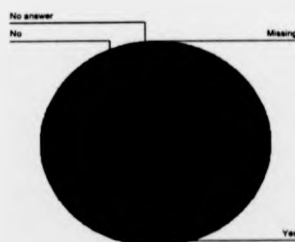
#### 4.41 Conclusion

The results among the youth show the influence of the cultural associations and cultural activists. It is also evident that there was a sudden growth in awareness after the relaxation of State control on radio, including the recognition of the abolition of slavery and the recognition of Maloya and its singers. One should not forget that rebellion is commonly born of adolescence. Generally at this age the youth wish to assert their independence and want to be revolutionary. Réunionese values, for instance the moral and intellectual values, are less important for the 15-29 year age bracket. The 40-49 group show that they have suffered the effects of Départementalisation and the policies of assimilation once again. It is very difficult for them to recognise the Creole language or music in public sphere. They rank Réunionese values and traditions most highly. The next part of this chapter will discuss the question of Creole language.

#### 4.5 The Creole language in Réunion

The Creole language was stigmatised at its inception by the French and now by the bourgeoisie and elite class. The Creole language has always been decried and for many years the government wanted to eliminate the language by imposing a uniform French language. From the 1960s it was forbidden to speak Creole at school in conformity with the Republican and Jacobinist tradition. However, the Creole language has been accepted for this new academic year of 2003 in most schools as well as in the University, where one can do now a BA in Creole. This is the first concrete result of the actions of cultural activist associations since their inception 25 years ago.

Figure 4.5: Do you speak Creole?



Some 82.9% of the population speak Creole, 14.8% do not speak Creole and 2.3% did not want to answer the question. Almost all of the population speak Creole and nearly everybody understands it. Among these responses almost 43.6% claim to speak Creole language as their sole language. Some 17.6% of the respondents claim



to speak it very often, while 26.5% of people said that they use the Creole language quite often. I conclude that almost all the people who answered this questionnaire speak Creole. Finally, among the people who do not speak Creole, 44.4% would like to speak it and 22.6% would not like to speak it. 33.1% of the respondents did not want to answer this question. Some demand does exist among non-Creole-speakers to speak this language.

**Table 4.22: Where and with whom do you speak Creole language?**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid %</b>
Family	573	82.2
Friends	493	70.5
Work	221	31.7
Everywhere	212	30.4
School	72	10.3
No Answer	6	0.9

Table 4.22 clearly shows that Creole language has been relegated to the private sphere. Réunionnais individuals do not use the Creole language in the public sphere.

**Table 4.23: Do you speak Creole? / Age group (%)**

	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Speak Creole	84.6	81.1
Do not speak Creole	13.0	16.6
No Answer	2.4	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 4.23 confirms my hypothesis that there are more men than women who speak Creole.

**Table 4.24: Do you speak Creole? / Age group (%)**

	15-29	30-39	40-49
Speak Creole	86.8	84.8	71.7
Do not speak Creole	11.0	13.3	25.0
No answer	2.1	1.9	3.3

In Table 4.24 we notice that it is predominantly the 15-29 group which speaks Creole, followed by the 30-39 group and finally the 40-49 group. It has always been thought that 40-49 year olds speak more Creole than the 15-29 year olds. Let us next consider the ethnic distribution of Creole language.

**Table 4.25: Do you speak Creole? / How do you define yourself? (%)**

	Kaf Blanc	Malbar	Petit Blanc	Métis	Comorien	Mahorais	Others	Chinois	Zarab	Malgache	Gros Blanc	Zorey
Yes	97.5	92.9	91.6	86.7	85.7	85.7	78.9	78.6	75.0	60.0	52.4	24.3
No	1.7	5.3	5.3	9.7	14.3	14.3	10.5	13.6	17.1	20.0	35.3	62.9
No Answer	0.8	1.8	3.1	3.6			10.6	7.8	7.9	20.0	5.9	12.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In Table 4.25 we see that almost all the Kaf and Malbar claim to speak Creole, as do the Métis, Chinois and Zarab groups. The Zorey, Comorien, Malgache and Mahorais assert that they speak Creole to a lesser extent.

**Table 4.26: Do you speak Creole? / Monthly income? (%)**

	750 €	751-1500 €	1501-2300 €	2301-3050 €	3051-4580 €	4581-6100 €	+ 6100 €	No Answer
Yes	96.2	96.0	88.0	73.3	49.2	43.3	50.0	87.4
No	1.3	2.3	11.1	24.4	49.2	56.7	50.0	6.8
No Answer	2.6	1.7	0.9	2.3	1.6			5.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is evident here and it confirms my hypothesis that those in the upper class speak less Creole language than those in the lower class. Let us see next how monthly income correlates to the particular ethnic groups.

**Table 4.27: How do you define yourself? / Monthly income? (%)**

	750 €	751-1500 €	1501-2300 €	2301-3050 €	3051-4580 €	4581-6100 €	+ 6100 €	No Answer
Comorien	57.1	14.3	14.3					14.3
Mahorais	14.3	42.9						42.9
Malgache	1.3	0.6		1.2				1.0
Kaf	22.7	36.7	12.7	6.0	2.7			19.3
Petit Blanc	13.3	31.1	20.0	12.2	3.3	3.3		16.7
Métis	12.0	35.2	14.4	11.2	14.4	4.0	0.8	8.0
Malbar	10.8	31.2	18.3	17.2	2.2	3.2	1.1	16.1
Others		15.8	15.8	21.1	5.3	15.8		26.3
Zorey		4.1	20.3	21.6	23.0	9.5	6.8	14.9
Chinois		10.7	10.7	17.9	21.4	10.7	10.7	17.9
Zarab			35.7	17.9	10.7	17.9	3.6	14.3
Gros Blanc			11.8	23.5	23.5	5.9	23.5	11.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The Kaf, Petit Blanc, Malbar and Métis groups in Table 4.27 are mainly lower and middle class (as are the Comorien, Mahorais and Malgache migrants to these classes). The upper class in Réunion is composed mostly of Zarab, Chinois, Zorey and Gros Blanc groups.

**Table 4.28: / Monthly income? How do you define yourself? (%)**

	Kaf	Métis	Petit Blanc	Malbar	Others	Comorien	Mahorais	Malgache	Chinois	Zarab	Zorey	Gros Blanc
750€	44.2	19.5	15.6	13.0		5.2	1.3	1.3				
751-1500 €	32.4	25.9	16.5	17.1	1.8	0.6	1.8	0.6	1.8		1.8	
1501-2300 €	17.9	17.0	17.0	16.0	2.8	0.9			2.8	9.4	14.2	1.9
2301-3050 €	10.6	16.5	12.9	18.8	4.7			1.2	5.9	5.9	18.8	4.7
3051-4580 €	6.9	31.0	5.2	3.4	1.7				10.3	5.2	29.3	6.9
4581-6100 €		16.7	10.0	10.0	10.0				10.0	16.7	23.3	3.3
+ 6100 €		6.7		6.7		1.0	3.0	1.0	20.0	6.7	33.3	26.7
No Answer	28.7	9.9	14.9	14.9	5.0	1.1			5.0	4.0	10.9	2.0

Table 4.28 confirms that the Kaf, Petit Blanc, Malbar and Métis groups are mainly lower and middle class (as are the Comorien, Mahorais and Malgache migrants to these classes). The results also confirm that the upper class in Réunion is composed mostly of Zarab, Chinois, Zorey and Gros Blanc individuals.

Table 4.29: If yes, do you speak Creole...? / How do you define yourself? (%)

	Kaf	Malbar	Malgache	Comorien	Mahorais	Métis	Petit Blanc	Zarab	Chinois	Others	Gros Blanc	Zorey
Always	59.9	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	44.4	44.1	30.8	25.9	22.2	20.0	3.8
Very often	17.8	20.4		16.7	50.0	18.8	18.3	11.5	18.5	16.7	6.7	11.5
Often	19.1	22.4	25.0	33.3		26.3	30.1	46.2	37.0	27.8	46.7	34.6
Rarely	2.5	3.1	25.0			7.5	5.4	7.7	14.8	16.7	26.7	44.2
Never		0.9						3.8	3.7	5.6		1.9
No Answer	0.6	2.2				3.0	2.2			11.1		3.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

It can be seen from Table 4.29 that the Kaf speak more Creole than all the other ethnic groups. Almost all of them claim to use Creole nearly exclusively. The Métis, Malbar and Petit Blanc groups come next. The Zorey speak the least Creole, while the Chinese and Gros Blanc also speak unexpectedly little Creole. I was also surprised to find that the Mahorais and Comorien speak as much Creole as the Zarab group. These results confirm my hypothesis that Creole is firstly the language of people who worked on or had a history related to sugar cane plantations and secondly is an index of integration into the Réunionese society.

**Table 4.30: Do you speak Creole? / Regions (%)**

	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	<b>West</b>
Yes	85.8	87.1	79.9	81.3
No	11.6	12.1	17.1	16.5
No Answer	2.6	0.8	3.0	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.30 reveals that most Creole is spoken in the East region of the island, while the South region speaks the least Creole. However, there is little inter-regional difference. I will show later that some non-Creole mother tongue speakers such as Comorien and Zorey are concentrated in the South.

**Table 4.31: Do you speak Creole? / High and Lowlands (%)**

	<b>Lowlands</b>	<b>Highlands</b>
Yes	82.1	87.4
No	15.7	9.7
No Answer	2.2	2.9
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 4.31 surprisingly shows a difference between the High and Lowlands with respect speaking to Creole.

Map 4.1: Do you speak Creole? / High and Lowlands

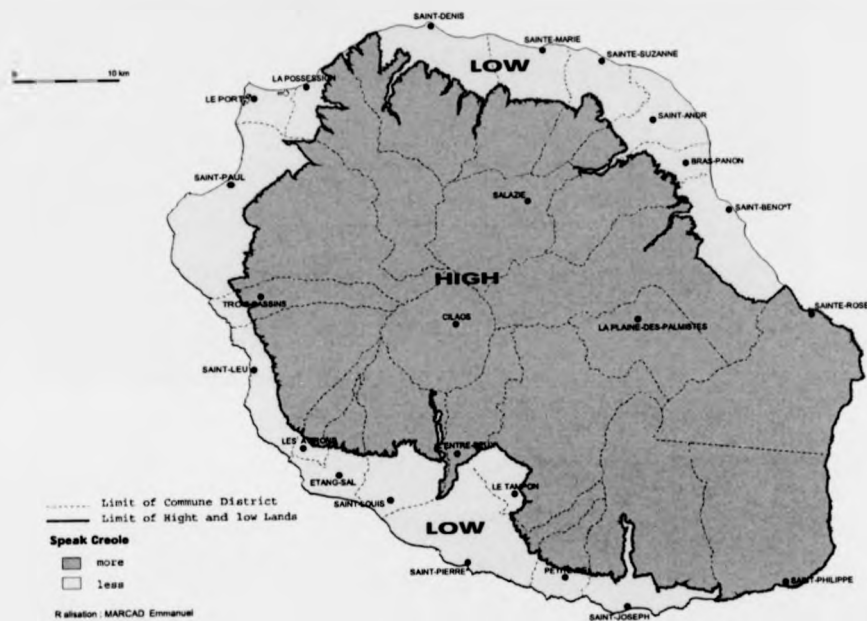


Table 4.32: Do you ever listen to programmes in Creole on the radio or watch Creole programmes on television?

	Frequency	Valid %
1 time per day	149	22.2
1 to 2 times per week	219	32.6
1 time per month	132	19.7
1 to 2 times per year	77	11.5
Do not watch programmes in Creole language	94	14.0
Total	671	100.0

Table 4.32 shows that 22.2% of respondents listen to or watch programmes in Creole once a day. If we add this to those who listen to or watch programmes once or twice a week, the percentage rises to 54.8%. Some 19.7% of the respondents watch or listen to a Creole programme at least once a month. According to the survey, 11.5% do so once or twice a year while 14.0% do not listen to or watch any Creole programmes. It is apparent that even those who frequently watch or listen to Creole programmes on TV or radio, still retain a preference for the French language.

**Table 4.33: Do you ever listen to or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television? / Gender (%)**

	Men	Women
1 time per day	27.0	17.7
1 to 2 times per week	33.1	32.2
1 time per month	17.8	21.4
1 to 2 times per year	10.1	12.8
Do not know program in Creole language	12.0	15.9
Total	100.0	100.0

One can notice from Table 4.33 that more men than women listen to or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television, but that the majority of them listen to or watch such programmes once or twice a week.

**Table 4.34: Do you ever listen to watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television? / Age Groups (%)**

	15-29	30-39	40-49
1 time per day	21.3	24.9	20.4
1 to 2 times per week	35.1	33.7	25.9
1 time per month	17.2	20.5	23.8
1 to 2 times per year	11.9	9.8	12.9
Do not know program in Creole language	14.4	11.2	17.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

As Table 4.34 shows the 15-29 and 30-39 groups listen to or watch programmes in Creole on radio or television more than the others age groups. The 40-49 group watch or listen slightly more than the 15-29 group. But the majority of them listen or watch more than twice a week.

**Table 4.35: Do you ever listen to or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television? / Do you speak Creole? (%)**

	Yes	No	No Answer
1 time per day	23.2	11.4	6.7
1 to 2 times per week	33.2	29.5	20.0
1 time per month	20.6	6.8	26.7
1 to 2 times per year	10.7	22.7	13.3
Do not know program in Creole language	12.3	29.5	33.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

One can see from Table 4.35 that half the respondents who speak Creole most often listen to or watch a programme in Creole.

**Table 4.36: Do you ever listen or watch to programmes in Creole on the radio or on television? / Lowlands and Highlands. (%)**

	Lowlands	Highlands
1 time per day	21.7	24.8
1 to 2 times per week	32.0	36.2
1 time per month	20.3	16.2
1 to 2 times per year	11.5	11.4
Do not know program in Creole language	14.5	11.4
Total	100.0	100.0

From the results in Table 4.36, it can be seen that people in the Highlands listen to or watch Creole programmes more often than those in the Lowlands.



**Table 4.37: Do you ever listen to or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television? / Regions (%)**

	North	East	South	West
1 time per day	24.8	25.6	20.1	20.3
1 to 2 times per week	30.9	37.2	31.0	33.1
1 time per month	17.4	14.9	20.5	23.8
1 to 2 times per year	13.4	8.3	13.5	9.3
Do not know program in Creole language	13.4	14.0	14.8	13.4
Total	100.0	100.0		100.0

It can be seen here in table 4.37 that there are more respondents in the East region who listen or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or television. We saw earlier that it is in the East that more people speak Creole. I conclude that those who speak Creole most often listen to or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or television.

**Table 4.38: Do you ever listen to or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television? / How do you define yourself? (%)**

	Kaf	Malbar	Métis	Petit Blanc	Others	Malgache	Gros Blanc	Mahorais	Comorien	Zorey	Chinois	Zarab
1 time per day	28.2	27.8	22.8	22.1	21.1	20.0	18.8	16.7	14.3	14.1	11.1	3.8
1 time per week	38.0	34.5	33.1	33.7	10.5	20.0	31.3	83.3		32.4	22.2	30.1
1 time per month	15.7	21.1	20.0	21.1	21.1	20.0	25.0		57.1	12.0	29.6	23.1
1 time per year	6.3	4.6	13.8	12.6	21.1		6.3		14.3	16.9	12.2	23.1
Do not know	11.8	11.9	10.3	10.5	26.3	40.0	18.8		14.3	23.9	14.8	19.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In Table 4.38, I have shown that the Malbar, Kaf, Petit Blanc and Métis groups listen to or watch Creole programmes on the radio or television more often than the other groups. The Zorey, Zarab, Chinois, Gros Blanc and Comorien do so less often than the other groups. Those who listen to or watch programmes in Creole

most often are those who are worst affected by unemployment, whereas those who are unaware of or choose to avoid programmes in Creole on the radio or television (except for the Comorien, non-Creole mother tongue speakers) are those who control the economic sector or hold the best positions in the administration. The results for the 'Others' group are close to those for Kaf, Malbar and Petit Blanc. The 'Others' group follow Creole language programmes on the radio or television more often than the Zorey, Chinois and Zarab.

**Table 4.39: Do you ever listen to or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television? / Monthly income? (%)**

	Less than 750€	751 to 1500€	1501 to 2300€	2301 to 3050€	3051 to 4580€	4581 to 6100€	More than 6100€	No Answer	Total
1 time per day	35.1	27.7	18.9	10.8	10.2	20.7	18.8	22.1	22.2
1 time per week	33.8	30.7	35.8	33.7	27.1	41.4	37.5	33.7	32.6
1 time per month	15.6	24.1	19.8	19.3	23.7	6.9	12.5	20.2	19.7
1 time per year	7.8	6.6	12.3	15.7	22.0	13.8	12.5	8.7	11.5
Do not know	7.8	10.8	13.2	20.5	16.9	17.2	18.8	15.4	14.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.39 reveals that those with less income more commonly follow programmes in Creole on the radio or on television conversely, more income implies less interest in Creole programmes. However the upper-class shows a little more interest than the upper-middle class with regard to programmes in Creole.

**Table 4.40: Do you ever read in Creole? (%)**

	Frequency	Valid %
1 time per day	67	10.0
1 to 2 times per week	110	16.4
1 time per month	133	19.9
1 to 2 times per year	185	27.7
Do not know literature in Creole language	174	26.0
Total	669	100.0

As Table 4.40 shows, 10.0% would appear to read in Creole once a day and 16.4% once or twice a week. This means that 26.4% of the respondents sometimes read in Creole; 19.9% of them claimed to read in Creole once or twice a month and 27.7% once or twice a year; 26.0% of the respondents do not know Creole literature. However, fewer people read in Creole than listen to it or watch it on the radio or television. This means, according to the last category, that fewer opportunities exist to read because there are not many publications in Creole and those that do exist are often difficult to locate. Thus, the conception of a Creole language is more oral than written.

**Table 4.41: Do you ever listen to or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television? / Do you read Creole? (%)**

Read Creole Listen to programmes	1 time per day	1 to 2 times per week	1 time per month	1 to 2 times per year	Do not know
1 time per day	72.8	26.4	21.2	13.7	10.4
1 to 2 times per week	12.3	49.1	40.9	34.6	21.4
1 time per month	10.8	13.6	29.5	23.1	15.6
1 to 2 times per year		6.4	3.8	20.9	15.6
Do not know program in Creole	4.6	4.5	4.5	7.7	37.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to table 4.41 people who read Creole most often are also those who listen to or watch programmes in Creole most often. Similarly people who do not read or read very little Creole are those who listen to or watch programmes in Creole language the least.

**Table 4.42: Do you read Creole? / Do you ever listen to programmes in Creole on radio or on television? (%)**

<b>Read Creole \ Listen to programmes</b>	<b>1 time per day</b>	<b>1 to 2 times per week</b>	<b>1 time per week</b>	<b>1 to 2 times per year</b>	<b>Do not know</b>
1 time per day	32.0	3.7	5.4		3.3
1 to 2 times per week	19.7	25.0	11.5	9.1	5.4
1 time per month	19.0	25.0	30.0	6.5	6.5
1 to 2 times per year	17.0	29.2	32.3	49.4	15.2
Do not know literature in Creole language	12.2	17.1	20.8	35.1	69.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.42 shows that it does not follow that because people listen to or watch a programme in Creole that they read Creole more frequently. To listen to or watch a programme in Creole language is much easier than reading. One must also bear in mind that there is no standard written Creole and many people are not used to reading it.

**Table 4.43: Do you speak Creole? / Do you read Creole? (%)**

<b>Read Creole \ Speak Creole</b>	<b>1 time per day</b>	<b>1 to 2 times per week</b>	<b>1 time per week</b>	<b>1 to 2 times per year</b>	<b>Do not know</b>
Yes	92.5	88.1	86.4	82.6	74.1
No	6.0	11.0	11.4	15.8	21.3
No Answer	1.5	0.9	2.3	1.6	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is to be expected that the people who read Creole, also speak Creole, which is confirmed in the survey according to Table 4.43. The people who do not know any literature in Creole or read once or twice a year are likely to speak less Creole or speak it less often.

**Table 4.44: Do you read Creole? / Do you speak Creole? (%)**

	Yes	No	Old
1 time per day	11.2	4.1	6.3
1 to 2 times per week	17.4	12.4	6.3
1 time per month	20.6	15.5	18.8
1 to 2 times per year	27.5	29.9	18.8
Do not know literature in Creole language	23.3	38.1	50.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In Table 4.44, it is evident that it is not a fact that if people speak Creole that they read literature or newspapers in Creole. Obviously those who speak less Creole read less. This finding may be explained by the fact that there is not much written material available in Creole. The majority of literature or newspapers are produced in French.

**Table 4.45: Do you read Creole? / Age groups. (%)**

	15-29	30-39	40-49
1 time per day	10.1	12.2	6.8
1 to 2 times per week	18.9	14.1	14.4
1 time per month	19.2	24.0	15.1
1 to 2 times per year	27.0	27.3	29.5
Do not know literature in Creole language	24.8	22.0	34.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In Table 4.45, we note that the Young and Adults read more Creole literature than the 40-49 age group, a similar finding to those regarding TV programmes. As to those who read once a day and those who read once or twice a week, the 15-29 age group is ranked above the 30-39 and 40-49 groups. It is likely that the 15-29 generation have more access to Creole literature than the other age groups. Perhaps this is one of the first positive effects of the struggle of cultural associations. But, in all, less than one third read more than twice a week.

**Table 4.46: Do you read Creole? / Gender (%)**

	Men	Women
1 time per day	14.1	6.1
1 to 2 times per week	18.0	14.9
1 time per month	19.3	20.5
1 to 2 times per year	23.9	31.3
Do not know literature in Creole language	24.8	27.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 4.46 shows that men read Creole more than women do. Less than a quarter of the women read more than twice a week while more than one third of the men read more than twice a week.

**Table 4.47: Do you read Creole? / Regions (%)**

	North	East	South	West
1 time per day	8.8	11.5	13.1	5.8
1 to 2 times per week	12.2	24.6	14.4	17.0
1 time per month	23.1	15.6	18.3	22.2
1 to 2 times per year	26.5	29.5	25.3	30.4
Do not know literature in Creole language	29.3	18.9	28.8	24.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The principal finding in Table 4.47 is that those in the South read Creole daily more often than those in the other regions. But when it comes to knowing which region reads more Creole literature per week, the results are similar to the other ones: people in the region read more Creole than in other regions. The results are similar to those for gender and age groups in terms of reading Creole literature more than twice a week: more than a third of those in the East read more, slightly more than a quarter in the South and people in the West and North read less Creole than a quarter of the total region.

Map 4.2: Do you read Creole? / Regions

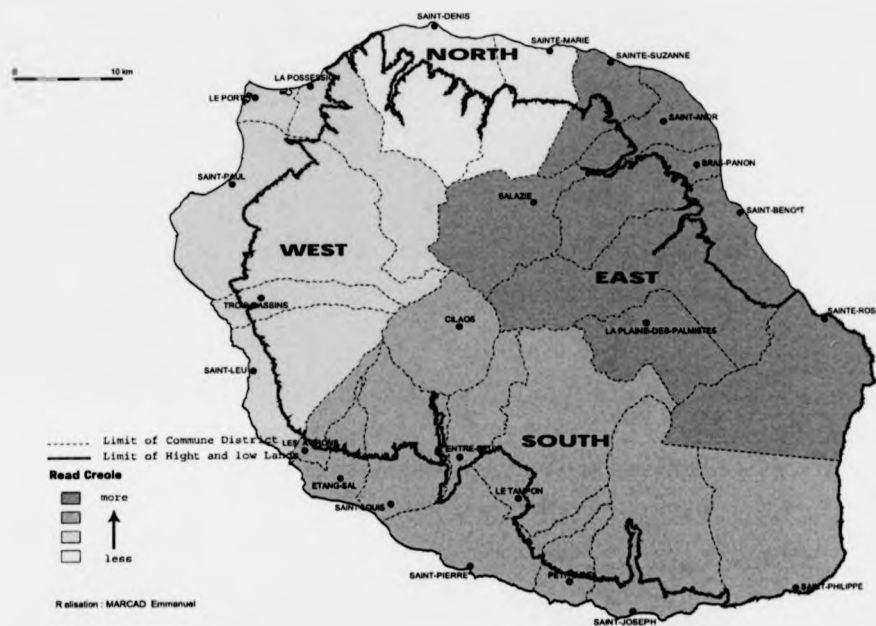


Table 4.48: Do you read Creole? / Low and Highlands (%)

	Lowlands	Highlands
1 time per day	9.3	13.7
1 to 2 times per week	16.4	16.7
1 time per month	19.9	19.6
1 to 2 times per year	27.5	28.4
Do not know literature in Creole language	26.8	21.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Here again, the results in Table 4.48 comparing the Lowlands and Highlands are similar to the other results. It can be seen that in the Highlands people read more Creole literature than in the Lowlands.

Map 4.3: Do you read Creole? / Low and Highlands

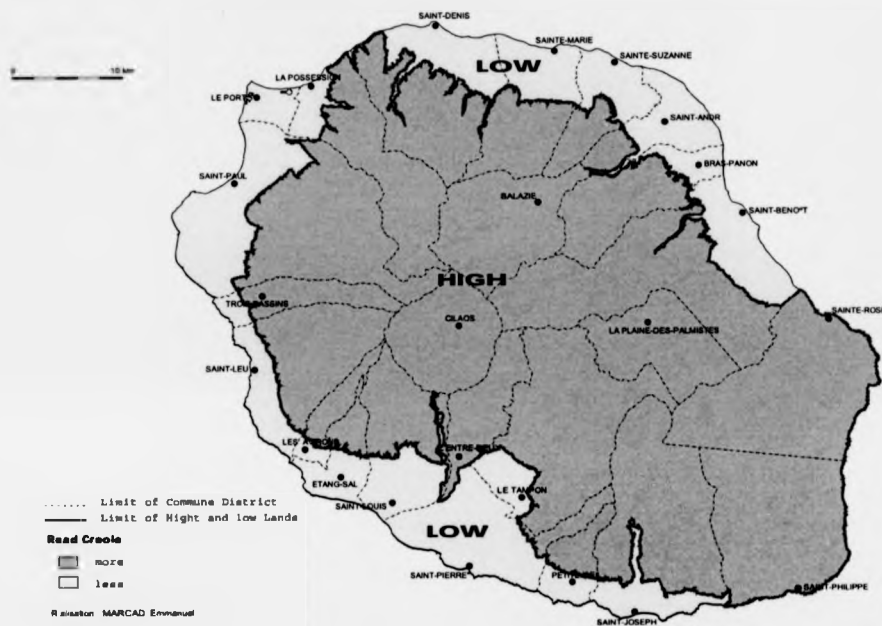


Table 4.49: Do you read Creole? / How do you define yourself? (%)

	Kaf	Malbar	Métis	Petit	Others	Zorey	Chinois	Mahorais	Zarab	Malgache	Gros Comorien
	Blanc										Blanc
1 time per day	15.0	13.0	12.5	10.4	5.3	2.9					
1 time per week	19.7	13.0	19.4	17.7	5.3	20.0	20.0	14.3	7.4		
1 time per month	21.3	27.8	18.1	13.5	15.8	18.6	12.0	14.3	25.9	50.0	40.0
1 time per year	22.8	25.9	28.5	31.3	36.8	22.9	28.0	28.6	48.1		20.0
Do not know	21.3	20.4	21.5	27.1	36.8	35.7	40.0	42.9	18.5	50.0	40.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0



In Table 4.49 we can see that the Kaf, Petit Blanc and Métis groups are the ones who most often read Creole literature. Not surprisingly the Zorey, Zarab, and Chinois read less Creole literature.

**Table 4.50: Do you like Réunionese music? / Do you read Creole? (%)**

	Read	1 time per day	1 to 2 times per week	1 time per week	1 to 2 times per year	Do not know
Listen						
Yes		94.0	96.3	90.8	83.5	73.6
No		1.5			2.2	2.3
Not rarely		3.0	0.9	6.2	4.4	5.7
No Answer		1.5	2.8	3.1	4.4	5.7
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The majority of the people who read Creole literature like Réunionese music according to Table 4.50. However, even those who do not read Creole literature like Réunionese music; We can see that the more one reads Creole literature, the more one likes Réunionese music and the less one reads Creole literature the less one likes Réunionese music.

**Table 4.51: Do you ever read Creole / Monthly income? (%)**

	Less than 750€	751 to 1500€	1501 to 2300€	2301 to 3050€	3051 to 4580€	4581 to 6100€	More than 6100€	No Answer	Total
1 time per day	15.6	11.9	7.7	7.3	5.1	3.3		10.7	10.0
1 time per week	16.9	14.9	21.2	12.2	11.9	20.0		20.4	16.4
1 time per month	20.8	24.4	18.3	22.0	22.0	20.0	20.0	11.7	19.9
1 time per year	22.1	24.4	34.6	31.7	27.1	26.7	40.0	26.2	27.7
Do not know	24.7	24.4	18.3	26.8	33.9	30.0	40.0	31.1	26.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.51 reveals that the lower class read more Creole than the middle class. The upper class read less than the other classes.

**Table 4.52: If you do not speak Creole would you like to speak it? (%)**

	Frequency	Valid %
Yes	55	44.4
No	28	22.6
No answer	41	33.1
Total	124	100.0

One can see in Table 4.52 that fewer than half the people who do not speak Creole would like to speak it and a quarter of them do not want to speak the language.

**Table 4.53: If you do not speak Creole would you like to speak it? Age groups (%)**

	15-29	30-39	40-49
Yes	49.2	44.4	34.5
No	13.6	22.2	41.4
No Answer	37.3	33.3	24.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Among those who do not speak Creole, Table 4.53 reveals that the Young group would like to speak it more than the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups. The 40-49 age group gave categorical answers. Only 24.4% gave 'No Answer'. They were decisive about what they want whereas in the Young and especially the Adult group more than one third gave 'No Answer'.

**Table 4.54: If you do not speak Creole would you like to speak it? Gender (%)**

Speak	Men	Women
Yes	53.4	36.6
No	15.5	28.8
No Answer	31.0	34.8
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 4.54 shows that men who do not speak Creole are more eager to learn to speak it than women who do not speak Creole.

Table 4.55: If you do not speak Creole would you like to? Ethnic groups (%)

	Gros Blanc	Kaf	Métis	Malgache	Mahorais	Zorey	Malbar	Petit Blanc	Zarah	Chinois	Comorien	Others
Yes	66.7	61.5	50.0	50.0	50.0	45.8	40.0	30.0	25.0	20.0		
No	33.3	19.2	12.5			33.3	10.0	30.0	25.0	40.0	33.3	33.3
No Answer		19.2	37.5	50.0	50.0	20.8	50.0	40.0	50.0	40.0	66.7	66.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

One can see from Table 4.55 that most of the Kaf and a surprisingly large number of Gros Blanc who do not speak Creole would like to learn to speak it. None of the Comorien who not speak the language would like to learn it. The Others group is similar in that fewer than half of those who do not speak do not want to learn it.

Table 4.56: In which language do you speak or will you speak to your children? (%)

	Frequency	Valid %
French only	100	14.8
French and Creole	486	72.0
Creole only	42	6.2
No Answer	47	7.0
Total	675	100.0

Table 4.56 shows that 6.2% of the respondents speak to their children only in Creole. Most of the people interviewed speak both French and Creole to their children. Are people still ashamed of speaking Creole to their children? Having been humiliated and oppressed in the public sphere 91.0% of persons who claim to speak Creole do not speak it in front of their children or try to hide it. Many parents speak in Creole between themselves and in French with their children or speak Creole with their children only when there are arguing, swearing or scolding? It is frowned on for parents to speak Creole. At the same time it is apparent that

three quarters of the respondents speak both languages to their children. They want to keep Creole alive alongside the dominant language. Parents think that by speaking more French than Creole their children will be more successful at school and later at work.

**Table 4.57: In which language do you speak or will you speak to your children? / Lowlands and Highlands (%)**

	Lowlands	Highlands
Only French	15.3	12.0
French and Creole	71.5	75.0
Creole only	6.1	7.0
No Answer	7.1	6.0
Total	100.0	100.0

The results in Table 4.57 are almost the same as for the previous table, however people speak slightly more Creole in the Highlands than in the Lowlands. Bilingualism is a little more widely practised in the Lowlands than in the Highlands. People speak more French to their children in the Lowlands than in the Highlands.

**Table 4.58: In which language do you speak or will you speak to your children? / Regions (%)**

	North	East	South	West
French only	14.4	10.9	14.7	18.1
French and Creole	75.5	73.1	69.4	71.9
Creole only	5.2	9.2	6.9	4.1
No Answer	5.2	6.7	9.1	5.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to Table 4.58, people in the West tend to speak to their children in French. In the East, people are more likely to speak Creole to their children. The North seems to be the most bilingual region with respect to parents conversing with their children.

**Table 4.59: In which language do you speak or will you speak to your children?  
/ Gender (%)**

	Men	Women
French only	18.2	11.6
French and Creole	67.6	76.2
Creole only	7.0	5.5
No Answer	7.3	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0

The result of Table 4.59 is quite surprising in that it is contrary to what people thought regarding gender and the Creole language. More men than women speak French only with their children. Similarly, more men speak Creole only to their children. The women are therefore the most bilingual in conversing with their children.

**Table 4.60: In which language do you speak or will you speak to your children?  
/ Age groups (%)**

	15-29	30-49	40-49
French only	12.4	14.2	20.8
French and Creole	72.4	75.5	66.4
Creole only	5.6	6.9	6.7
No Answer	9.6	3.4	6.0
Total	100.0	100.00	100.00

As Table 4.60 shows, though the 40-49 group speaks the most French only to its children it is also the group that speaks or will speak more Creole to its children than the 30-39 and 15-29 groups in both cases. But the 30-39 and, to a slightly lesser extent, the 15-29 group are most bilingual.

**Table 4.61: In which language do you speak or will you speak to your children?  
/ How do you define yourself? (%)**

	+											—	
	Kaf	Zarab	Zorey	Comorien	Malbar	Petit Blanc	Métis	Malgache	Chinois	Gros Blanc	Mahorais	Others	
French only	7.9	35.7	37.1	28.6	11.8	6.3	12.0		14.3	11.8	14.3	21.1	
French and Creole	78.0	57.1	51.4	42.9	72.7	83.3	73.9	60.0	78.6	76.5	57.1	68.4	
Creole only	7.9		2.9		11.8	5.2	7.0			5.9			
No Answer	6.3	7.1	8.6	28.6	3.6	5.2	7.0	40.0	7.1	5.9	28.6	10.5	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 4.61 the Zorey, Comorien and Zarab speak more French whereas the Malbar and the Kaf are most likely to speak only Creole to their children. The Petit Blanc, Gros Blanc, Chinois, Métis and Kaf groups are the most bilingual with their children.

**Table 4.62: In which language do you speak or will you speak to your children? / Monthly income? (%)**

	Less than 750€	751 to 1500€	1501 to 2300€	2301 to 3050€	3051 to 4580€	4581 to 6100€	More than 6100€	No Answer	Total
French Only	10.5	7.7	12.5	21.2	22.0	33.3	31.3	14.6	14.8
French and Creole	68.4	78.7	78.8	74.1	67.8	60.0	62.5	66.0	72.0
Creole only	15.8	7.7	3.8		5.1			5.8	6.2
No answer	5.3	5.9	4.8	4.7	5.1	6.7	6.3	13.6	7.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The upper class speaks more French to their children according to Table 4.62, while the lower class speaks more Creole. The middle class predominantly speaks both Creole and French to their children. However in general all classes have the tendency to speak both Creole and French to their children.

**Table 4.63: Would you like your children to speak...?**

	Frequency	Valid %
French only	20	2.9
French and a foreign language	46	6.8
French and Creole	160	23.5
Creole only	7	1.0
Creole and a foreign language	19	2.8
French, Creole and a foreign language	428	62.9
Total	680	100.0

As one can see from Table 4.63, 2.9% would like their children to speak only French and 1.0% would like their children to speak only Creole; 6.8% would like their children to speak French and a foreign language; 2.8% would like their

children to speak Creole and a foreign language; 22.9% said that they would like their children to learn French and Creole and 62.9% said that they would like their children to speak French, Creole and a foreign language. Although representatives, notably the teachers and lecturers of the French language in schools have 'stigmatised' the Creole language in Réunion <sup>30</sup> one can see that there are more parents who would like their children to speak Creole in the future, however in addition to French and other languages: parents generally want their children to speak several languages. The majority would like their children to speak three languages indicating a globally-aware attitude.

**Table 4.64: Would you like that your children speak...? / Gender (%)**

	Men	Women
French only	3.3	2.6
French and a foreign language	7.5	6.1
French and Creole	24.9	22.2
Creole only	1.2	0.9
Creole and a foreign language	3.0	2.6
French, Creole and a foreign language	60.1	65.7
Total	680	100.0

Table 4.64 shows that more women than men would like their children to speak French, Creole and a foreign language. Men would like their children to speak more French and Creole, French only, Creole only and Creole and foreign language. Most parents would like their children to speak three languages and less than one quarter would like their children to speak only French and Creole.

<sup>30</sup> See Ronan Le Goffic, p195-196.

**Table 4.65: Would you like your children to speak...? / Age groups (%)**

	15-29	30-39	40-49
French only	2.8	3.9	2.9
French and a foreign language	5.5	4.3	6.8
French and Creole	20.6	24.6	23.5
Creole only	2.2		1.0
Creole and a foreign language	3.1	1.9	2.8
French, Creole and a foreign language	65.8	65.2	62.9
Total	680	100.0	100.0

Looking at Table 4.65 no surprise that the Young and Adult groups are the ones that would most like their children to be trilingual as well as wanting their children to use Creole. The 40-49 group want to retain close contact with French.

**Table 4.66: Would you like your children to speak...? / Regions (%)**

	North	East	South	West
French only	4.5		3.1	3.4
French and a foreign language	6.5	5.7	8.7	5.1
French and Creole	25.3	20.5	24.9	22.3
Creole only	1.3	3.3		0.6
Creole and a foreign language	3.2	1.6	1.7	4.6
French, Creole and a foreign language	59.1	68.5	61.6	64.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

We can see in Table 4.66 that those in the East region want their children to speak French. The region also achieved the strongest vote for trilingualism and for wanting children to speak only Creole. The South is the most committed to French.



**Table 4.67: Would you like your children to speak...? / High and Lowlands (%)**

	Lowlands	Highlands
French only	2.9	3.0
French and a foreign language	7.3	4.0
French and Creole	23.7	22.8
Creole only	1.2	
Creole and a foreign language	2.8	3.0
French, Creole and a foreign language	62.2	67.3
Total	680	100.0

In Table 4.67, there is little difference between the Highlands and the Lowlands.

The results are similar to the earlier tables. In both areas, the majority are in favour of trilingualism, this view being even more strongly asserted in the Highlands.

**Table 4.68: Would you like your children to speak...? How do you define yourself? (%)**

	Kaf	Zarah	Zorey	Comorien	Malbar	Petit Blanc	Métis	Malgache	Chinois	Gros Blanc	Mahorais	Others
French only	3.8	14.3	1.4		4.5	2.1	1.4			5.9		
French and Foreign language	3.8	7.1	13.7	28.6	4.5	3.2	4.2		11.5	17.6		26.3
French and Creole	27.7	17.9	13.7	14.3	27.3	26.3	23.6	40.0	11.5	29.4		21.1
Creole only	0.8				2.7	1.1	1.4					
Creole and foreign language	4.6		1.4		1.8	2.1	3.5	20.0		5.9	14.3	
French, Creole and foreign language	59.2	60.7	69.9	57.1	59.1	65.3	66.0	40.0	76.9	41.2	85.7	52.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In Table 4.68, we see again that the Kaf, Malbar, Petit Blanc and Métis groups are the ones that want their children to speak Creole. But there is one important difference. Less than half the Gros Blanc would like their children to speak three languages while most of the other ethnic groups would like their children to be trilingual. The Chinois, Comorien and Zorey would like their children to speak French and another foreign language.

**Table 4.69: Would you like your children to speak...? Monthly income? (%)**

	Less than 750€	751 to 1500€	1501 to 2300€	2301 to 3050€	3051 to 4580€	4581 to 6100€	More than 6100€	No Answer	Total
French only	3.9	2.4	2.8	1.2	3.4	3.3		2.0	2.9
French and foreign language	6.5	5.3	3.7	5.8	8.5	13.3	18.8	8.8	6.8
French and Creole	29.9	22.5	23.1	17.4	25.4	16.7	6.3	28.4	23.3
Creole only	1.3	1.8						2.9	1.0
Creole and foreign language	3.9	3.0	2.8	4.7			6.3	2.0	2.8
French and Creole and foreign language	54.5	65.1	67.6	70.9	62.7	66.7	68.8	55.9	62.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

As can be seen in Table 4.69 almost all social classes would like their children to speak French, Creole and a foreign language. Among these the upper class feels more strongly than the lower class that their children should speak three languages.

**Table 4.70: Would you like your children to speak...? / In which language do you speak or will you speak to your children ? (%)**

	French Only	French and Creole	Creole only	No answer
French only	12.1	1.7		
French and a foreign language	20.2	3.5	4.8	15.2
French and Creole	14.1	24.1	42.9	21.7
Creole only	2.0	0.8	2.4	
Creole and a foreign language	2.0	2.7		4.3
French, Creole and a foreign language	49.5	67.2	50.0	58.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Finally from Table 4.70 it is evident that most people who speak two languages with their children would like them to speak French, Creole and a foreign language. Those who speak only French with their children would like their children to speak both French and a foreign language. Those who speak only Creole with their children would like them to speak French and Creole. People who are bilingual are more open to learning to additional languages.

**Table 4.71: Are you in favour of the official recognition of the Creole language? (%)**

	Frequency	Valid %
Yes	317	47.1
No	209	31.1
No answer	67	10.0
Do not know	80	11.9
Total	673	100.0

Table 4.71 reveals that 47.1% of respondents feel Creole should be given official recognition in the public sphere. Some 31.1% who answered this question said that they are in favour of official recognition of Creole and 11.9% answered that they 'do not know'. Finally, 10.0% of the respondents did not answer this question. These results are in contrast with Tables 4.56 and 4.63 showing more people who support official recognition of Creole. Clearly, Réunionnais would like to see Creole used more often in the media and administration, but this does not necessarily extend to the use of Creole at school.

**Table 4.72: Are you in favour of the official recognition of the Creole language? / Regions (%)**

	North	East	South	West
Yes	53.9	52.8	46.3	38.0
No	26.3	30.1	30.0	37.4
No answer	5.9	9.8	11.5	11.7
Do not know	13.8	7.3	12.3	12.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

One can see in Table 4.72 that the East and North regions are more in favour of a recognition of Creole in the public sphere than the other regions. This is in line with the previous tables which showed the East region as more familiar with Creole speakers. The result also reminds us that more Zorey and non-Creole speakers live in the West and South.

Map 4.4: Are you in favour of the official recognition of the Creole language? / Regions

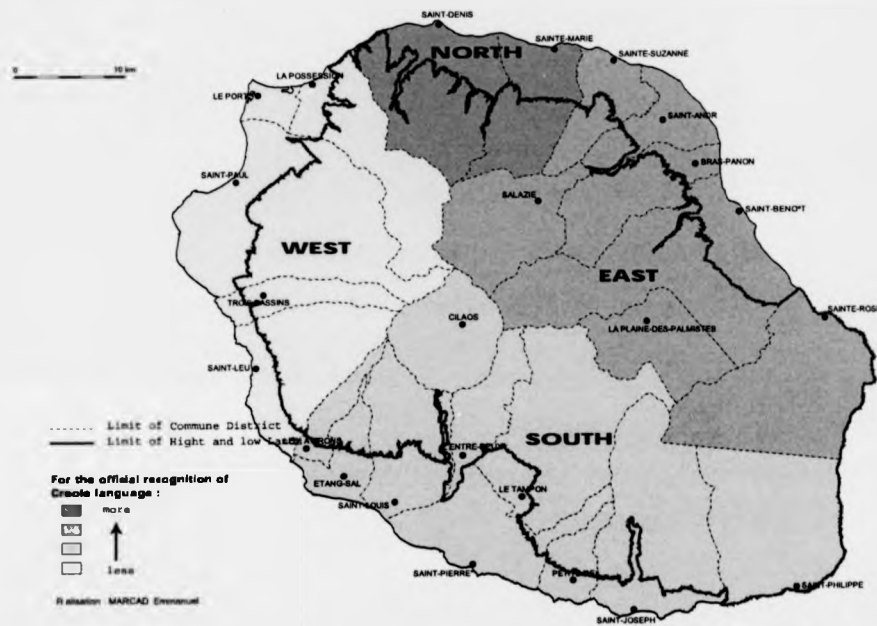


Table 4.73: Are you in favour of the official recognition of the Creole language? / High and Lowlands (%)

	Lowlands	Highlands
Yes	46.1	52.9
No	31.3	29.4
No answer	10.5	6.9
Do not know	12.1	10.8
Total	100.0	100.0

One can see in Table 4.73 that respondents from the Highlands are more in favour of the recognition of Creole in the public sphere than those in the Lowlands.

**Table 4.74: Are you in favour of the official recognition of the Creole language? / Gender**  
(%)

	Men	Women
Yes	53.8	40.6
No	27.8	34.2
No answer	8.5	11.4
Do not know	10.0	13.7
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 4.74 reveals that males are much more inclined to recognise Creole in the public sphere than the female group. More women also gave no answer or 'did not know'.

**Table 4.75: Are you in favour of official recognition of Creole? / How do you define yourself? (%)**

	+											—	
	Kaf	Malbar	Métis	Comorien	Zarab	Petit Blanc	Malgache	Zorey	Others	Chinese	Gros Blanc	Mahorais	
Yes	64.3	59.0	55.5	50.0	44.4	43.3	40.0	31.0	27.8	25.0	11.8		
No	15.5	21.9	27.4	16.7	33.3	39.2		42.3	38.9	46.4	64.7	42.9	
No answer	14.7	4.8	7.5	16.7	11.1	12.4		19.7	11.1	10.7	17.6	28.6	
Do not know	5.4	14.3	9.6	16.7	11.1	5.2	60.0	7.0	22.2	17.9	5.9	28.6	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

In Table 4.75 the Kaf supports further recognition of Creole in public sphere. This applies to a lesser extent in the case of the Malbar. The Gros Blanc, Chinese and Zorey on the whole do not want Creole to be recognised.

**Table 4.76: Are you in favour of the official recognition of the Creole language? Monthly income? (%)**

	Less than 750€	751 to 1500€	1501 to 2300€	2301 to 3050€	3051 to 4580€	4581 to 6100€	More than 6100€	No Answer	Total
<b>Yes</b>	68.8	71.3	73.1	68.6	56.7	62.1	37.5	59.8	66.5
<b>No</b>	9.1	13.2	12.5	15.1	20.0	20.7	25.0	14.7	14.4
<b>No Answer</b>	9.1	8.4	4.8	9.3	16.7	13.8	31.3	11.8	10.1
<b>Do not know</b>	13.0	7.2	9.6	7.0	6.7	3.4	6.3	13.7	9.0
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.76 shows that the lower class favours the official recognition of the Creole language to a greater extent than other social classes. The upper class is definitely in favour of official recognition of the Creole language.

**Table 4.77 Are you in favour of the official recognition of the Creole language? / Age groups (%)**

	15-29	30-39	40-49
<b>Yes</b>	48.0	53.9	45.0
<b>No</b>	28.0	29.9	33.6
<b>No answer</b>	10.6	8.3	10.1
<b>Do not know</b>	13.4	7.8	11.4
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is no surprise that the results in Table 4.77 confirm that the 40-49 group is least keen on the Creole language in the public sphere, followed by the 15-29 and 30-39 groups. The 15-29 group was most hesitant in their responses to this question.

**Table 4.78: Are you in favour of the official recognition of the Creole language? / Do you speak Creole? (%)**

	Yes	No	No Answer
<b>Yes</b>	52.0	19.6	21.4
<b>No</b>	28.8	43.5	21.4
<b>No answer</b>	8.8	13.0	42.9
<b>Do not know</b>	10.3	23.6	14.3
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

Only half the respondents who speak Creole wish to recognise Creole in the public sphere according to Table 4.78. Conversely those who do not speak Creole are not in favour of recognising Creole in the public sphere. They are also the most hesitant in answering the question. Those who did not want to reveal whether or not they speak Creole also preferred not to comment on whether or not they favoured the recognition of Creole in the public sphere.

**Table 4.79: Are you in favour of the official recognition of the Creole language? / If yes, do you speak Creole...? (%)**

Recognition Speak	Every time	Very Often	Often	Rarely	Never	No Answer
Yes	67.5	46.5	37.6	28.1	20.0	14.3
No	17.0	28.9	42.4	47.4	60.0	21.4
No answer	6.1	12.3	9.4	12.3		57.1
Do not know	9.4	12.3	10.6	12.3	20.0	7.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 4.79 shows that the majority of the people who favoured the recognition of Creole in the public sphere always or often speak Creole. Most of the people who do not speak Creole do not want it recognised in the public sphere.

#### 4.51 Conclusion

Among the many contemporary ways of affirming Creole identity it is evident that language is one of the most salient criteria. I have demonstrated that use of the language is widespread in Creole society. It is not spoken outside the islands except by those Réunionnais who have emigrated to France and other countries. Creole

competes with French in an unequal contest. The results of this survey are to be placed in a new debate between the actors in the public sphere regarding this renewed identity. Pierre Jean Simon<sup>31</sup> holds that language is the most important and fundamental trait of a community. The question of a Creole language deserves special consideration. Without the Creole language in Réunion, there can be no Réunionnais identity. Réunionnais' Creole is a real, fully-fledged language.

It is usually assumed that more Creole is spoken in the South and North of the island. The results show the same percentage throughout Réunion. There is therefore no significant social fragmentation; people from all classes speak Creole.<sup>32</sup>

I note also that even the aristocracy, the dominant class and the Réunionese bourgeoisie speak Creole. However, they tend to put French before Creole. Creole has always been primarily the language of the nation, of the popular class and of the sugar cane plantation.

While I have provided a conclusion to each section in Chapter 4, a longer conclusion to this final section is integrated with the conclusion provided at the end of Chapter 5. This is to allow integration of the argument across the empirical findings as a whole.

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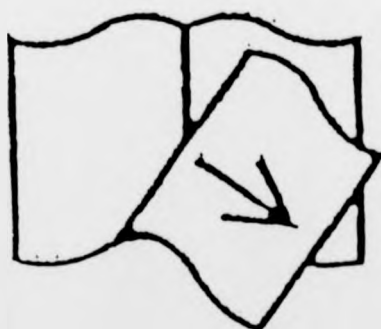
<sup>31</sup> Simon, P.-J. (1998) *La Bretonnité. Une ethnologie problématique*. Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

<sup>32</sup> One must distinguish between speaking and understanding Creole. In my view almost everybody understands Creole, although not everybody speaks it.



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## CHAPTER V

### Questionnaire Analysis: Other Aspects of Réunionese Identity

#### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 reported the first part of my empirical findings covering the general context and cultural aspects of Réunionese identity. I paid particular attention to the question of language. In Chapter 5, I report the other aspects of identity covered in the survey of 699 respondents who were, as indicated before, selected on the basis of their ethnic representativeness. Chapter 5 is particularly concerned with music, the creation of a distinctive flag, and certain religious rites, affiliations and beliefs. A conclusion, integrating the survey as a whole, is provided at the end of Chapter 5.

#### 5.2 Réunionese representation and music

**Table 5.1: Have you ever displayed a pro-Réunion sticker on your car?**

	Frequency	Valid %
<b>Yes</b>	74	11.0
<b>No</b>	536	79.4
<b>No Answer</b>	65	9.6
<b>Total</b>	675	100.0

As table 5.1 shows, only 11.0% of those surveyed displayed a pro-Réunion sticker on their car; 9.6% failed to give a proper answer and 79.4% had never displayed any sign of belonging to Réunion on their car. Perhaps this is explained by the fact that local associations do not issue stickers. Let us look in detail at what kind of signs people stick on their cars. Of the 699 people surveyed, only eight displayed a map of Réunion on

their car and nine a sticker saying 'Mi Koz Kreol'; nine people answered 'car registration' <sup>2</sup> (see Table 5.2). In total, only 79 people claim to have displayed a sticker on their car. This means that there is very little assertion of identities or autonomist nationalist movements or associations in this domain.

**Table 5.2: Have you ever displayed a pro-Creole sticker on your car?**

	Frequency	Valid %
<b>Yes</b>	41	6.1
<b>No</b>	592	88.6
<b>No Answer</b>	35	5.2
<b>Total</b>	668	100.0

Regarding the Creole language, only 6.1% displayed a pre-Creole sticker on their cars according to table 5.2. Of the others responses 5.2% did not answer the question and 88.6% had never displayed a sticker in support of Creole. As before the low number of those who mounted a sticker may be explained by the lack of associations or councils providing the stickers. There is no promotion by the authorities and many people are still afraid of the opinion of authorities and feel ashamed to speak Creole in the public sphere. Let us see precisely what people stick on their cars.

Of the 699 persons surveyed, only 41 (5.9 per cent) mounted a sticker promoting Creole on their cars. Among these, 32 used the 'Mi Koz Kreol' sticker produced by the MRICR <sup>3</sup> (a cultural association) and these people were located in the South and West of the island, in the region where the MRICR is located. Ten stickers were from other cultural associations and eight other stickers were in support of the Creole language, but not made by cultural associations.

<sup>1</sup> Mi Koz Kreol: I speak Creole.

<sup>2</sup> The car registration number 974 represents the Département of Réunion. It is also the postal code of Réunion.

<sup>3</sup> MRICR: Mouvement pour la Reconnaissance de l'Identité Culturelle Réunionnaise. This Association has been created in 1997 and promotes the cultural identity of the Réunionnais through the Creole language (see further details in the introduction of Chapter 6).

There is not a cultural 'urge' in the collective conscience. This is why cultural activists are starting to impose their policy. All the stickers that I asked respondents to specify were made by cultural activist associations.

**Table 5.3: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion in staying a French Département?**

	Frequency	Valid %
Yes	434	64.6
No	106	15.8
No Answer	69	10.2
Do not know	63	9.4
Total	672	100.0

What should be established at the very outset from table 5.3 is that 64.6% of the respondents are in favour of the creation of a flag which represents Réunion in staying a French Département. 9.4% do not really know whether they support the creation of one flag or not and 10.3% did not want to answer the question. Surprisingly, only 15.8% are radical and do not want a flag for the island. Members of the right party, according to this survey, are favourable to this idea. One always think that people were very reticent with the idea of having a flag therefore one need urgently to think about this idea which could be a big step of the construction of reference in putting in the public sphere the question of cultural identity.

A number of key issues arise from these results. I surmise here that Réunionnais need an identity symbol, which will permit them to distinguish Réunion from other French Départements while remaining within the whole French entity. Such a symbol would also follow separate recognition in the Indian Ocean world and in the other overseas and Caribbean French Départements. Unusually, Réunion has no flag, whereas flags exist for Corsica, Britannia, Basque country, Occitania and even in Martinique,

Guadeloupe and French Guyana. Nevertheless the debate has started to enter the public domain. It appears that people think to have a flag may means 'independence' and they are scared of this status.

The detailed cross-tabulations on the question concerned with the creation of a flag are presented below:

**Table 5.4: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents, Réunion while it stays a French Département? / Gender (%)**

	Men	Women
Yes	64.5	64.6
No	17.6	14.0
No Answer	11.2	9.4
Do not know	6.7	12.0
Total	100.0	100.0

According to these results in table 5.4 there is no gender difference regarding the creation of a flag. Nearly two thirds of all questioned being in favour of flag creation.

**Table 5.5: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion, while it stays a French Département? / Age groups (%)**

	15-29	30-39	40-49
Yes	67.6	64.2	58.7
No	12.1	19.4	18.7
No Answer	10.6	6.5	14.7
Do not know	9.7	10.0	8.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

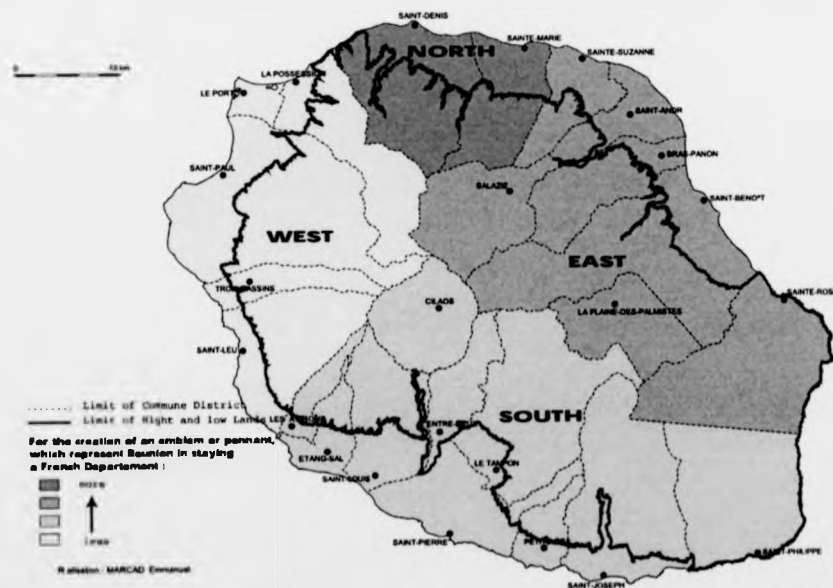
In table 5.5 all three generations are in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion while it remains a French Département. The 15-29 group is most supportive of the idea, the 40-49 group less so, with the Adult group close to norms.

**Table 5.6: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion while it stays a French Département? / Regions (%)**

	North	East	South	West
Yes	68.5	68.0	61.4	63.0
No	17.4	14.8	14.5	16.8
No Answer	5.4	9.8	11.4	13.3
Do not know	8.7	7.4	12.7	6.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Able 5.6 shows that all the regions are in favour of the creation of a flag, though surprisingly the North and East regions are more positive than the other regions.

**Map 5.1: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion while it stays a French Département? / Regions**

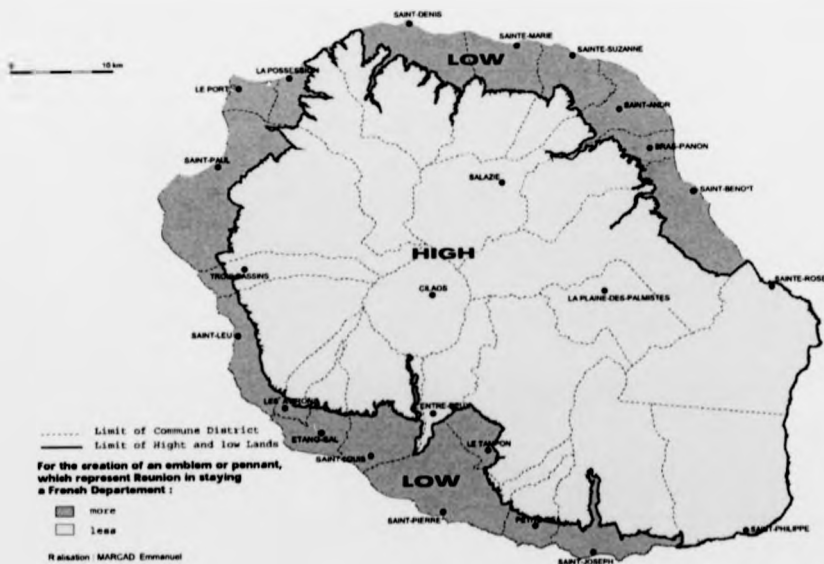


**Table 5.7: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion while it stays a French Département? / Low and Highlands (%)**

	Lowlands	Highlands
Yes	65.0	62.0
No	16.1	14.0
No Answer	10.1	11.0
Do not know	8.7	13.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Contrary to expectations, table 5.7 shows that the Lowlands are somewhat more in favour of creation of a flag than the Highlands. The Highlands are also the most uncertain giving the most 'do not know' and 'no' answers.

**Map 5.2: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion while it stays a French Département? / Low and Highlands**



**Table 5.8: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion while it stays a French Département? / How do you define yourself? (%)**

	+											-
	Zarab	Kaf	Malbar	Petit Blanc	Métis	Chinese	Zorey	Malagasy	Gros Blanc	Others	Mahorais	Comorien
Yes	77.8	73.8	67.6	67.0	65.1	64.3	63.8	60.0	50.0	38.9	33.3	14.3
No	11.1	6.9	13.9	18.1	13.7	25.0	13.9		31.3	27.8	16.7	28.6
No Answer	7.4	11.5	7.4	6.4	11.6	7.1	8.3	20.0		5.6	33.3	28.6
Do not know	3.7	7.7	11.1	8.5	9.6	3.6	13.9	20.0	18.8	27.8	16.7	28.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.8 reveals another unexpected finding: the Zarab, Zorey, Petit Blanc and Chinese groups are those who are among the most favourable to the idea of the creation of a flag for the island. The Zarab group is even more favourable than the Kaf group.

**Table 5.9: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion while it stays a French Département? / Do you ever listen programmes in Creole on Radio or on Television? (%)**

Programmes	1 time per day	1 to 2 times per week	1 time per month	1 to 2 times per year	Do not know
Supportive flag					
Yes	72.6	72.4	62.5	59.7	53.2
No	8.9	11.2	19.5	13.9	21.3
No Answer	10.3	7.5	7.0	15.3	17.0
Do not know	8.2	8.9	10.9	11.1	8.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.9 confirms that people who watch or listen Creole programmes on the radio or television are those who are the most supportive of a flag in Réunion. While those who watch or listen these programmes less are less in favour of the creation of a flag, an absolute majority is in favour in all cases.

**Table 5.10: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion while it stays a French Département? / Monthly income? (%)**

	750 €	751-1500 €	1501-2300 €	2301-3050 €	3051-4580 €	4581-6100 €	+ 6100 €	No Answer	Total
Yes	68.8	71.3	73.1	68.6	56.7	62.1	37.5	59.8	64.6
No	9.1	13.2	12.5	15.1	20.0	20.7	25.0	14.7	15.2
No Answer	9.1	8.4	4.8	9.3	16.7	13.8	31.3	11.8	10.3
Do not know	13.0	7.2	9.6	7.0	6.7	3.4	6.3	13.7	9.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0



Table 5.10 reveals once again that lower and middle class are more in favour of the creation of a flag which represents Réunion than the upper class.

**Table 5.11: Are you in favour of the creation of flag, which represents Réunion while it stays a French Département? / Do you like Réunionese music? (%)**

	Yes	No	Not rarely	No answer
Yes	69.9	33.3	53.3	29.6
No	13.2	33.3	21.7	14.8
No Answer	8.2	22.2	11.7	48.1
Do not know	8.7	11.1	13.3	7.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In table 5.11 it can be seen that those who like more Réunionese music are most supportive of the creation a flag and vice versa.

**Table 5.12: Are you in favour of the creation of a flag, which represents Réunion while it stays a French Département? / Do you speak Creole? (%)**

Speak Creole	Yes	No	No answer
Creation of flag			
Yes	67.7	56.8	31.3
No	14.1	18.2	12.5
No Answer	9.0	11.4	56.3
Do not know	9.2	13.6	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.12 reveals no surprises. The respondents who speak Creole are the most in favour of the creation of a flag, whereas the ones who do not speak Creole are also the ones who want a distinctive flag less. However, even those who do not speak Creole spoke in favour of a flag for Réunion.

**Table 5.13: Who are the public figures who best represent Réunion? (%) <sup>4</sup>**  
(first 12 among 45 nominated)

1/ Jackson Richardson	79.5
2/ Paul Verges	43.8
3/ Danyel Waro	34.8
4/ Laurent Robert	24.6
5/ Baster	22.2
6/ Margie Sudre	19.5
7/ Jean Paul Virrapoulé	14.7
8/ Raymond Barre	12.6
Rolland Garros	12.6
10/ Zizkakan	12.6
11/ Grand Mer Kal	11.7
12/ Jacques De Chateauvieux	9.0

Of the first five figures public, two are sportsmen (Jackson Richardson and Laurent Robert) and two musicians (Danyel Waro and Baster). The first political figure ranked is Paul Verges, general secretary of the Réunionese Communist Party, and Senator and President of Regional Council, in 2<sup>nd</sup> position. Next one can see a group of politicians in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> positions, all from the different Right-wing parties. Margie Sudre, originally from Vietnam and now representing Réunion as a European Deputy is the only woman among the first twelve public figures ranked. Jean-Paul Virapoullé is a Senator-Mayor one of the greatest personality of politic in Reunion, he is among the Malbar ethnic group. Raymond Barre is a Gros Blanc but lived in France for the last sixty years. He was the first Réunionnais to become a Prime Minister of France from 1976 to 1981. Great economist he was also vice-president of European commission and set up the European monetary system. Raymond Barre, who left Réunion more than sixty years ago, is still in the heart of Réunionnais. Grand Mer Kal is eleven in the rank and she is a popular character in a folk tale, represented by a woman. We also notice

<sup>4</sup> The best cumulative first, second, third and fourth result in percentage.

that Rolland Garros <sup>5</sup> who died 83 years ago is also considered a public figure representative of Réunion. Réunion's most prominent businessman, Jacques de Chateaufieux, achieves the 12<sup>th</sup> position. It is likely that a number of the rankings derive from the media coverage of certain people.

From the table one can see that of the twelve names four are or were Gros Blanc (2<sup>nd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> position), four Kaf (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> position), two Malbars (7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> position), one Vietnamese (6<sup>th</sup> position) and one derived from a folk tale (11<sup>th</sup>). These are not intellectuals, writers, or indeed from the world of literature. It is often said in Réunion that there are no symbols or public figures to represent Réunion outside of the island, even less so for Réunionnais emigrants. From this survey I can deduce that in the collective mind there are people who can be seen as leaders. This information could be of interest in the promotion of the island.

**Table 5.14: Who or what best represents Réunionese identity in the metropolitan territory or in the world at large? <sup>6</sup>**

1/ Its Volcano	86.5
2/ Its Gastronomy	64.5
3/ Its Mountain	64.4
4/ Its Musicians	56.2
5/ Its Sportsmen	55.0
6/ Its Beaches	51.8
7/ Writers	13.3
8/ Its Intellectuals	9.9

As table 5.14 shows, the respondents placed greatest emphasis on the island's natural features. However, musicians and sportsmen are ranked above the beaches, which the people of Réunion tend to undervalue. Being as they are at the bottom of the table, the

<sup>5</sup> Rolland Garros is honoured during the French tennis tournament in Paris each year.

<sup>6</sup> The best cumulative first, second, third and fourth result in percentage.

writers and intellectuals are clearly not regarded as good ambassadors for Réunion. Is this because the island has produced so little learned production?

**Table 5.15: Which singer or musical group represents Réunion best?**  
(first 12 in %)

1/ Baster	63.9
2/ Danyel Waro	55.1
3/ Ousanousava	37.9
4/ Ziskakan	36.7
5/ Gramoun Lélé	32.9
6/ Jacqueline Fareyrol	14.9
7/ Maxime Laope	13.9
8/ Ti Sours	11.7
9/ Ti Fock	11.3
10/ Michel Admette	9.2
11/ Analyse	8.4
12/ Firmin Viry	5.7
Mars Tou Sel	5.7

In table 5.15 six of the twelve singers or bands are from Maloya, three have a Maloya background and three Ségas. One could perhaps have an alternative table as follows:

modern Maloya  
traditional Maloya  
modern Maloya  
mix Maloya  
traditional Maloya  
Séga  
Séga  
mix Maloya  
modern Maloya  
Séga  
traditional Maloya  
traditional Maloya

As can be seen, the first five are groups that assert a strong identity, verging almost on a call for independence. They are also those who sell the most CDs and are the most popular in Réunion. The society feels in tune with these artists or groups and shares

their struggle ideals. This table would have looked very different twenty years ago, for Maloya music was not allowed to be played in public places until 1981.

**Table 5.16: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya ?**

	Frequency	Valid %
<b>Yes</b>	408	60.2
<b>Yes, but a long time ago</b>	129	19.0
<b>No</b>	141	20.8
<b>Total</b>	678	100.0

Kabar Maloya is held during the evening, when one can dance and sing to Creole music originating in Africa and Madagascar. As can be seen from table 5.16, 20.8% had taken part in a Kabar Maloya. On the other hand, 60.2% said that they had already been to a Kabar Maloya and 19.0% said that they had been to one but not recently. Does this mean that the tradition is dying out? If one adds both the affirmative results, 79.2 per cent, namely more than three-quarters had seen or taken part in a Kabar Maloya, which makes this event very popular. From the data we can deduce that Kabar Maloya has been democratised. It is sometimes forgotten that Kabar Maloya was not allowed on governmental television or radio until 1981.

**Table 5.17: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / Gender**

	Men	Women
<b>Yes</b>	68.6	52.0
<b>Yes, but a long time ago</b>	13.8	24.1
<b>No</b>	17.7	23.8
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0

Men have participated significantly more in Kabar Maloya than women according to table 5.17. A high proportion of women answer 'yes but a long time ago'. This suggests perhaps, that their domestic responsibilities have reduced their opportunities for participation.

**Table 5.18: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / Age groups (%)**

	15-29	30-39	40-49
Yes	62.4	65.0	48.7
Yes, but a long time ago	16.5	18.9	24.7
No	21.1	16.0	26.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

From table 5.18, it is seen that the 15-29 and 30-39 generation have participated in Kabar Maloya more frequently than the older generation. This is to be expected since Kabar Maloya has only been official for only twenty one years. Youth are more likely to lead an active social life.

**Table 5.19: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / Regions (%)**

	North	East	South	West
Yes	59.9	57.6	64.8	56.9
Yes, but a long time ago	23.7	20.5	13.5	21.3
No	16.4	23.0	21.7	21.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In table 5.19, the South region is first, followed the North region. If one compares the table listing music bands, many of them come from the South, East and North regions.

Map 5.3: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / Regions

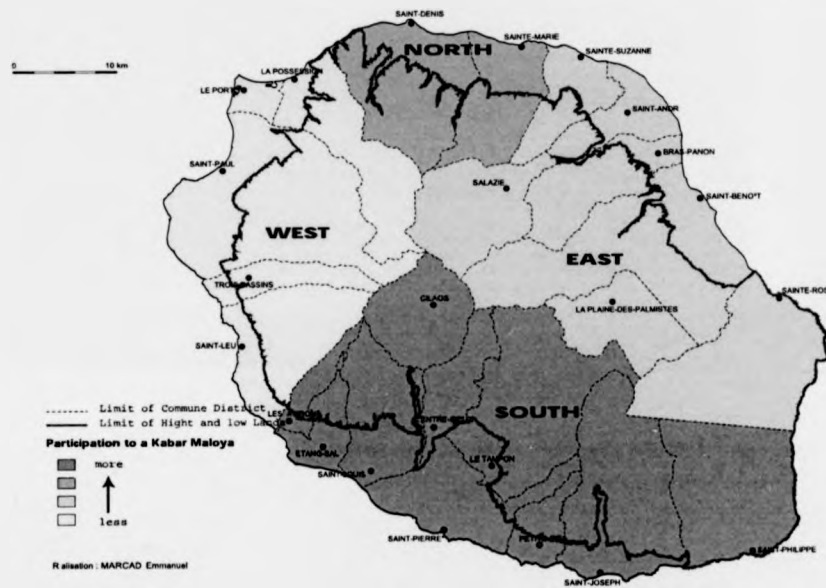


Table 5.20: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / Highlands and Lowlands (%)

	Lowlands	Highlands
Yes	58.3	70.6
Yes, but a but long time ago	19.4	16.7
No	22.2	12.7
Total	100.0	100.0

According to table 5.20 considerably more people in the Highlands have been to a Kabar Maloya than the Lowlands. The balance is restored when it comes to those who participated a long time ago.

Map 5.4: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / Highlands and Lowlands

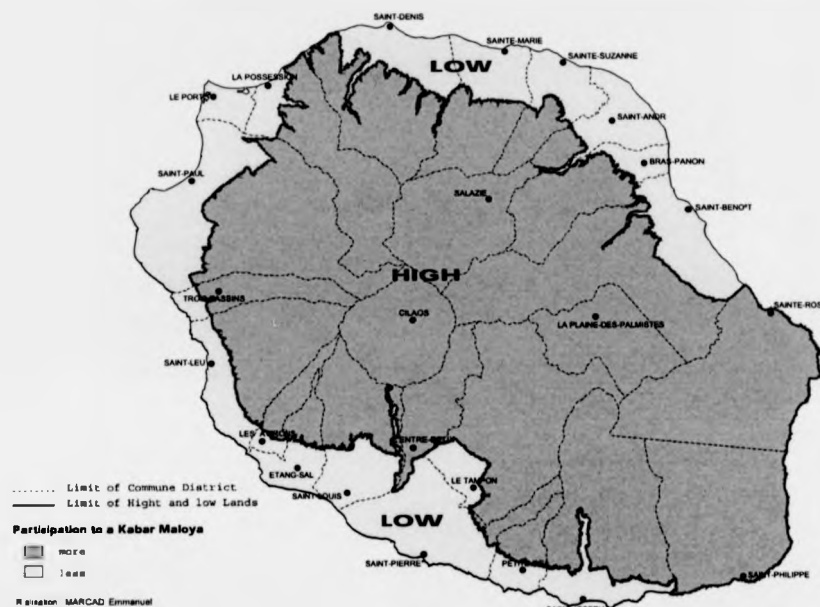


Table 5.21: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / How do you define yourself? (%)

	+										-	
	Kaf	Métis	Malbar	Petit Blanc	Chinese	Comorien	Zorey	Malagasy	Gros Blanc	Others	Zarab	Mahorais
Yes	79.4	74.8	64.2	52.6	50.0	42.9	40.5	40.0	35.3	31.6	29.6	28.6
Long time ago	10.7	14.7	22.9	24.2	10.7	42.9	23.0	20.0	41.2	10.5	25.9	28.6
No	9.9	10.5	12.8	23.2	39.3	14.3	36.5	40.0	23.5	57.9	44.4	42.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Taking the ethnic group into consideration in table 5.21, we can see that the majority of the Kaf group has been to a Kabar Maloya. It should be acknowledge that the term Kabar dates from the time of slavery and Maloya dance and music is more likely to be



recognised by the slaves' descendants. Then come the Métis and Malbar groups. These three ethnic groups constitute the majority of the members to Réunion's members. One can notice that the Zorey, Zarab, Chinese and Gros Blanc ethnic groups had rarely been to a Kabar Maloya. It is also true that the latter ethnic groups are hardly ever members of a musical band. Nonetheless, more than half of them have attended a Kabar Maloya at some stage.

**Table 5.22: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / Monthly income? (%)**

	750 €	751-1500 €	1501-2300 €	2301-3050 €	3051-4580 €	4581-6100 €	+ 6100 €	No Answer	Total
<b>Yes</b>	73.1	72.1	59.4	50.0	49.2	48.3	31.3	53.4	60.2
<b>Long time ago</b>	14.1	15.1	17.9	27.4	20.3	24.1	18.8	20.4	19.0
<b>No</b>	12.8	12.8	22.6	22.6	30.5	27.6	50.0	26.2	20.8
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.22 shows that the lower class had definitely participated in a Kabar Maloya more than middle and upper class. The upper class is the group who participated the less in a Kabar Maloya.

**Table 5.23: Do you like Réunionese music? / Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? (%)**

	Yes	Yes, but a long time ago	No
<b>Yes</b>	94.8	79.7	63.8
<b>No</b>		2.3	5.7
<b>Not rarely</b>	1.2	5.5	9.9
<b>No answer</b>	4.0	12.5	20.6
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

Obviously, the majority of the respondents who had been to a Kabar Maloya like Réunionese music, as confirmed in Table 5.23 above. By the same token, it is unlikely that those who do not like Réunionese music would go to a Kabar.

**Table 5.24: Do you speak Creole? / Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? (%)**

	Yes	Yes, but a long time ago	No
Yes	95.3	92.2	77.9
No	3.2	7.0	16.4
No answer	1.5	0.8	5.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In another finding that confirms expectations in table 5.24, naturally the majority of the people who have been to a Kabar Maloya at least once speak Creole and the reverse is also true.

**Table 5.25: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / Do you speak Creole? (%)**

	Yes	No	No answer
Yes	63.1	28.9	40.0
Yes, but a long time ago	19.2	20.0	6.7
No answer	17.7	51.1	53.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Here, in table 5.25, one can see that only half of the respondents have been to a Kabar at least once, though most people who speak Creole have been to a Kabar Maloya in Réunion.

**Table 5.26: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / Do you ever listen or watch programmes in Creole on the radio or on television? (%)**

	1 time per day	1 to 2 times per week	1 time per month	1 to 2 times per year	Do not know
Yes	74.0	70.0	60.0	37.0	36.6
Yes, a long time ago	14.4	14.7	20.8	31.5	23.7
No answer	11.6	15.2	19.2	31.5	39.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Here table 5.26 the majority of those who more frequently watch or listen programmes in Creole have been to a Kabar Maloya. People who less frequently watch or listen to programmes in Creole are less likely to go to a Kabar Maloya.

**Table 5.27: Do you like Réunionese music? (%)**

	Frequency	Valid %
Yes	581	85.3
No	11	1.6
No answer	28	4.1
Not rarely	61	9.0
Total	681	100.0

I need not concern myself here with the explosion of Réunionese music because this type of music is not really well known worldwide, such as Salsa, Samba, Tango or Zouk, but an important aspect of this music is that the Réunionese people like their music and are proud of it. From these data found in table 5.27 one can see that 85.3% of respondents enjoy Réunionese music and that 9.0% quite like it. However, 4.1% did not want to answer the question and only 1.6% said that they did not like Réunionese music. I can therefore say with some certainty that Maloya is the national and traditional music of Réunion.

**Table 5.28: Do you like Réunionese music? / Gender (%)**

	Men	Women
Yes	88.0	82.8
No	2.7	0.6
No answer	2.7	5.4
Not rarely	6.6	11.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Men like Réunionese music more often than women do according to table 5.28, but the majority of both men and women generally like Réunionese music.

**Table 5.29: Do you like Réunionese music? / Age groups (%)**

	15-29	30-39	40-49
<b>Yes</b>	84.9	88.3	82.0
<b>No</b>	2.2	1.5	0.7
<b>No answer</b>	4.3	2.9	5.3
<b>Not rarely</b>	8.6	7.3	12.0
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

In table 5.29 the 30-39 group and 15-29 groups like Réunionese music more than the 40-49 group, but in general the majority like Réunionese music.

**Table 5.30: Do you like Réunionese music? / Regions (%)**

	North	East	South	West
<b>Yes</b>	86.6	91.9	80.3	86.3
<b>No</b>	3.4	0.8	1.7	0.6
<b>No answer</b>	3.4	3.3	4.7	4.6
<b>Not rarely</b>	6.7	4.1	13.2	8.6
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Compared to the earlier table, we can see here in table 5.30 that the East 'retakes' its place and is far ahead of the other regions. There is a contrast between the people who have been to a Kabar, where the South region takes first place, and this result. This could mean that there is a difference in music structure: there are less bands in the East than in the South, and more places to go out in the South than in the East region.

Table 5.31: Do you like Réunionese music? / High and Lowlands (%)

	Highlands	Lowlands
Yes	84.8	88.3
No	1.7	1.0
No answer	4.5	1.9
Not rarely	9.0	8.7
Total	100.0	100.0

According to this survey this table 5.31 shows that there is not much difference between the low and highlands in Réunion with regard to the amount of people Réunionese music.

Table 5.32: Do you like Réunionese music? / How do you define yourself? (%)

	+										-	
	Kaf	Métis	Malbar	Petit Blanc	Mahorais	Chinese	Zorey	Comorien	Gros Blanc	Other	Zarab	Malagasy
Yes	93.8	93.8	90.7	85.4	85.7	75.0	71.6	71.4	70.6	68.4	67.9	60.0
No			1.9	1.0			2.7		11.8		14.3	
No answer	3.1	4.1	1.9	8.3	14.3	25.0	18.9	14.3	25.0	15.8	14.3	40.0
Not rarely	3.1	2.1	5.6	5.2			6.8	14.3		15.8	3.6	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In table 5.32 one can observe that almost all of the Kaf group like Réunionese music, while the Métis, Malbar and Petit Blanc groups score better than the other ethnic groups. The Zorey, Comorien or Mahorais ethnic groups claim to like Réunionese music more than the Zarab and Chinese.

Table 5.33: Do you like Réunionese music? / Monthly income? (%)

	750 €	751-1500 €	1501-2300 €	2301-3050 €	3051-4580 €	4581-6100 €	+ 6100 €	No Answer	Total
Yes	94.8	90.7	80.4	79.1	81.7	93.3	81.3	77.2	85.3
No	1.3		4.7	2.3		3.3		1.0	1.6
No answer	1.3	6.4	2.8	3.5	3.3			6.9	4.1
Not rarely	2.6	2.9	12.1	15.1	15.0	3.3	18.8	14.9	9.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.33 reveals that in general all social classes like Réunionese music. However we can see that lower class likes Réunionese more than middle and upper class.

**Table 5.34: Have you ever participated in a Kabar Maloya? / Do you like Réunionese music? (%)**

	Yes	No	No Answer	Not rarely
Yes	66.6		19.2	26.2
Yes, but a long time ago	17.7	27.3	26.9	26.2
No	15.7	72.7	53.8	47.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.34 shows that most of the people who like Réunionese music have been to a Kabar and, obviously the less they like Réunionese music, the more likely it is that they have not been to a Kabar Maloya.

**Table 5.35 Do you know any Réunionese folk tales and legends?**

	Frequency	Valid %
Yes	452	67.4
No	146	21.7
No Answer	74	10.9
Total	672	100

According to Table 5.35, 67.3% of the respondents know Réunionese folk tales and legends. 21.7% claim not to know any and 11.0% did not want to answer this question.

**Table 5.36: Do you know any Réunionese folk tale or legend? / Gender**

	Men	Women
Yes	62.9	71.4
No	26.7	17.1
No Answer	10.4	11.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Men know less Réunionese folk tales or legends than women according to Table 5.36.

**Table 5.37: Do you know any Réunionese folk tale or legend? / Age groups (%)**

	Young	Adult	Old
Yes	69.7	66.7	62.8
No	19.8	21.9	25.7
No Answer	10.5	11.4	11.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.37 shows that the 15-29 and 30-39 year olds generation know more Réunionese folk tales or legends than the 40-49 generation. This is to be expected, since these folk tales are more mediatised, there is considerable production in libraries, and they are also told in school.

**Table 5.38: Do you know any Réunionese folk tales or legends? / Regions (%)**

	North	East	South	West
Yes	70.9	73.3	66.7	60.7
No	17.6	17.5	22.1	27.7
No Answer	11.5	9.2	11.3	11.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In Table 5.38, the East region is ranked first. They know more Réunionese folk tales or legends than the North region, followed by the South and finally the West.

**Table 5.39: Do you know any Réunionese folk tales or legends? / Highlands and Lowlands (%)**

	Lowlands	Highlands
Yes	68.0	63.0
No	21.5	23.0
No Answer	10.5	14.0
Total	100.0	100.0

According to table 5.39 considerably more people in the Lowlands know Réunionese folk tales and legends than in the Highlands.

**Table 5.40: Do you know any Réunionese folk tales or legends? / How do you define yourself? (%)**

	+												-	
	Petit Blanc	Zarab	Métis	Kaf	Malbar	Zorey	Chinois	Others	Malgache	Gros Blanc	Mahorais	Comoriens		
Yes	76.9	70.4	72.0	69.9	66.7	63.9	60.7	57.9	50.0	47.1	28.6	14.3		
No	13.2	22.2	15.2	23.1	21.9	26.4	35.7	15.8	25.0	23.5	57.1	71.4		
No answer	9.9	7.4	12.9	7.1	11.5	9.7	3.6	26.3	25.0	29.4	14.3	14.3		
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		

Taking the ethnic group into consideration in table 5.40, one can see that the majority of the Petit Blanc, Zarab, Métis, Kaf, Malbar and Zorey group know some Réunionese folk tales or legends. The Gros Blanc ethnic group do not know many Réunionese folk tales.

**Table 5.41: Do you know any Réunionese folk tales or legends? / Monthly income? (%)**

	750 €	751-1500 €	1501-2300 €	2301-3050 €	3051-4580 €	4581-6100 €	+ 6100 €	No Answer	Total
Yes	73.7	62.1	67.9	71.1	69.5	70.0	75.0	64.7	67.4
No	22.4	26.0	22.6	19.3	20.3	6.7	18.8	20.6	21.7
No answer	3.9	11.8	9.4	9.6	10.2	23.3	6.3	14.7	10.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to this table 5.41 all social classes know Réunionese folk tales or legends with a slight tendency more for upper class. I think because it becomes more mediated, during the recent years and there is considerable production in libraries or media libraries. These places and institutions are more frequented by middle and upper classes.

**Table 5.42: If not, why?**

	Frequency	Valid %
Difficult to find	57	35.6
Not interested	60	37.5
No answer	27	16.9
Others	16	10.0
Total	160	100.0

In table 5.42, 35.6% of the people who claim to not to know any Réunionese folk tales or legends affirm that it is difficult to come across some Réunionese folk tales or



legends. 37.5% say that they are not interested. 19.6% did not give an answer for this question while 8.7% said that it is for an other reason.

**Table 5.43 If you know any Réunionese folk tales or legends who are they? (%)**  
(First 5 among a list of 23)

Grand Mer Kal	63.5
Ti Jean and Grand Diable	21.6
Sitarane	4.9
Mme Debassyns	2.8
La Buse	1.9

Gran Mer kal by far in front ahead of other ones figures.<sup>7</sup> The legend of Grand Mer Kal explains the origins of the island. The legend takes place in the Mahavel forest, a place renowned for witchcraft in Réunion. The Mahavel forest is linked to accounts of Maronnage. In the story, Grand Mer Kal shows maternal love for her children in the role of nanny. However Grand Mer Kal is also similar to the witch in African folk tales. Réunionese folk tales it is the same witch figure: the character meets her along the road (often in the forest, near a river or in the mountains). Grand Mer Kal is enigmatic and symbolises the forest and water. She gives rewards those who talk nicely to her and punishes to those who talk badly to her.

Ranked second behind Gran Mer Kal by a long way are 'Ti Jean and Gran Diable. This is the story of the children and the adult. 'Ti Jean always strives to be released from the overwhelming power of the adult. There is also the problematic of slavery

<sup>7</sup> For further information more than I have I developed above, I refer the reader to the interview of Ketty Sabadell, a story teller. Her nickname is Grandmerkal and she is the founder of the cultural association called Gran Mer Kal. The above information is from the interview and informal discussion we had during my fieldwork in Réunion. See Sabadell, K. (2004). 'Les contes et légendes: un éveil à la conscience de soi, l'acceptation de sa différence, une force pour une génération en perdition, fondamentaux pour la construction identitaire', in Médés, L., Labache, L. et F. Verges, eds. (2004). *Identité et Société Réunionnaises. Nouvelles Perspectives, Nouvelles Approches*. Paris: Karthala. (Forthcoming).

transmitted by the ancestors. The slaves are to struggling to find a solution in the fight against the masters. Ti Jean is the terrible child of African folk tales and he is smart.

In third position is Sitarane who lived until ninety years ago, and is the first actual person to become a legend. Sitarane is a positive hero. He spent his life killing the wealthy people. Sitarane was also a witch during his lifetime and was killed by guillotine in Réunion. When his head fell down, he continued on to utter strange words saying that he will come back. Everyday people put a huge mass of flowers on his grave to ask him for power and ask him to bad luck upon their enemies by black magic. Sitarane is the nickname of Simicoundza Simicourba, an indentured labour born in Mozambique.

In fourth position is Madame Debassyns. She was the owner of a huge number of slaves during the slavery period and she is believed to have been a terrifying woman. She is the symbol of power and cruelty. According to legend, she is said to have given the slaves' children to the pigs. She controlled the politic and economic life during her lifetime and also had the reputation of crushing all the dominated slaves reducing them nothingness. She symbolises fire, hell and the volcano.

The last in this Table 5.43 is La Buse the nickname of Olivier Le Vasseur, a pirate who died in Réunion more than three centuries ago. According to the legend, he was arrested after robbing ships for years in the Indian Ocean and before being killed, he through a parchment to the crowd shouting 'to the one who will discover my treasures!' Today in his grave in the West of the island La Buse rests still his secret, keeping of the place where this treasure is hidden.

This shows that there is still strong oral tradition and history kept alive these Réunionese folk tales and legends in the collective imagination. According to Ketty

Sabadell,<sup>8</sup> Réunionese folktales and legends unite Réunionnais in terms of a shared past linked to the history of slavery and indentureship. There is also the expression of death and suicide which are present with the idea that after the death the spirit comes back to haunt the living.

The results regarding Réunionese folk tales and legends show that these are an important part of the Réunionese cultural identity. The historical context (slavery period) makes reference to the condition of the slave and, to the powerful position of the master. There are many accounts of marronnage with the mark of Africa and Madagascar, the founders of the Réunionese imaginary. The marronnage in the island symbolises freedom and non-submission to the master. These folk tales and legends are a kind of awakening of the self-conscious by the recognition of a common imaginary and the acceptance of its differences. These myths, folk tales and legends are the foundations of the Réunionese collective unconscious. Through these accounts the African footprints impose themselves on the Réunionese society as the oldest strongest part of Réunionese identity.

The image of Gran Mer Kal has also been used over the last three years to counter the arrival of Halloween on 31 October. This change illustrates that Réunion is part of the globalisation trend, but makes use of a local reference.

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<sup>8</sup> Sabadell, K. (2004) 'Les contes et légendes: un éveil à la conscience de soi, l'acceptation de sa différence, une force pour une génération en perdition, fondamentaux pour la construction identitaire', in Médée, J., Labache, J. et F. Verges, eds. (2004). *Identité et Société Réunionnaises. Nouvelles Perspectives, Nouvelles Approches*. Paris: Karthala. (Forthcoming).

### 5.21 Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from all of this? It would appear that apart from Paul Verges, politicians are less popular than sportsmen and musicians. These results reveal the important place of sport in social mobility and success. Notably, this is true of football and handball in Réunion. I also observe that the struggle for the defence of identity plays an important role in the choice of musicians like Danyel Waro, Ziskakan, Baster, and Oussanousava. However, according to the survey, the external image of Réunion is not reflected in music and sport. The political realities of Réunionese identity appear in the answers at a secondary level.

Relationships between society and culture, between social organisation and musical expression are important parts of symbolical identity construction. As Chérubini proclaims, 'music should be considered as a social fact'<sup>9</sup> and it is certainly the most visible cultural product in Réunion. Music is also more accessible than other artistic and cultural expressions<sup>10</sup> and one cannot help, but witness the astonishing diversity of the musical creation on the island. According to Desrosiers,<sup>11</sup> for some youngsters living in lower class areas, music has become a means of recognition. Music is also a way of promoting a cultural language. It used to be forbidden and absent from the media and public demonstrations until beginning of 1980s. Later, Maloya returned to its Maloyan roots. Maloya is one of the faces of an old form of primitive Sëga (also found in Mauritius). It was born from musical expressions through, vocals and instrumentals, and was danced by African and Malagasy slaves. According to some historians and

<sup>9</sup> Chérubini, B. (1996) 'L'expression musicale et la construction locale des identités', in Chérubini, B., ed. *Regards sur le Champ Musical*. St-André: Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines. Université de La Réunion, p. 5

<sup>10</sup> See Chérubini, B. (1996).

<sup>11</sup> Desrosiers, B. (1996) 'Le Discours sur la musique, le discours sur l'identité à La Réunion', in Chérubini, B., ed. *Regards sur le Champ Musical*, St-André: Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines. Université de La Réunion.

musicologists it had been fostered by the Indian indentured workers and later on by the sons of the colonists. Maloya is an example of 'sharing zones', 'locations of passages'. Originally a dance to honour the dead and to communicate with spirits and gods, it has now recurred in the *Servis Malgasé*.<sup>12</sup> As with the Creole language, one needs to accept Maloya to be integrated in the society. If I compare language with music the latter is more advantageous: it gives a voice to the subjugated Creole language, through a more worthy musical language.<sup>13</sup>

It is the typical language of this multicultural exchange and acceptance of this music as the Creole language of integration marks creolisation as musical behaviour. Up until 1981, 'la fête Kaf' of 20 December celebrating the abolition of slavery was not allowed. The social prohibition also affected Maloya, which is an identity element for a major part of the population. The Réunionese Communist Party then widely relaunched Maloya and used it claim it social and political thoughts. The consequences of this are numerous. Debré and the plantocracy had stigmatised the Maloya as a 'counter-culture' and for a long time contributed to the prohibition of Maloya bands or any other 'claiming' music.<sup>14</sup> There is an evolution of literature, linked to the identity claim. Maloya is the music of the sugar cane fields, of resistance, of refusal. It is a way to affirm Réunionese identity. Maloya is both a reality and a marker of identity.

This discordant and contradictory speech should not be linked to a particular form of music but to social reality and its identity stakes. The notion of a search for identity

<sup>12</sup> *Servis Malgasé*: religious festival of Malagasy origin, adopted and creolised by some Afro-Malagasy (Kaf), Métis and Malbar. This religious festival need in respect of death and ancestors has become syncretic.

<sup>13</sup> Desroches, M. (2000). 'Musique et identité culturelle des Tamouls de La Réunion', in Bernabé, J., Bonniol, J.-L., Confiant, R., et G. L'Étang, eds. (2000). *Au Visiteur Luminieux: Des Îles Créoles aux Sociétés Pluridites. Mélanges offerts à Jean Bernabé*. Guedekoupe: Ibis Rouge Editions. Presses Université Créoles. Petit-Bourg. p. 356

<sup>14</sup> Desroches, 1996: 33.

allows us to view the musical behaviours as 'identity strategies'.<sup>15</sup> Issues such as partnership/affiliation, the feeling of belonging and recognition bring us back to the identity question; Tract to the individuals and by extension of the group.<sup>16</sup>

Nowadays, Maloya and Ségá are taken to represent the search for identity.<sup>17</sup> Even though some people link Ségá with a more conservative state of mind and Maloya with progressive thought, it does happen that people play Maloya as if they were playing in Ségá spirit and vice-versa. There used to be a distinction between Ségá and Maloya but this is no longer the case. They may have different names, but the style and rhythm tend to go in the same 'musical direction'. 'People tend to mix them both'.<sup>18</sup> Maloya is a modern expression of old customs that have been rediscovered. Its past is also the past of a major section of Réunionese society. It also represents the history of its Malagasy and African origins.

Moreover the African footprints are represented through the accounts of folk tale which impose themselves on the Réunionese society as the oldest strongest part of Réunionese identity. As we have seen Gran Mer Kal is a public figure like all the folk tales, there is an expression of understood this part of cultural identity. These results regarding Réunionese folk tales and legends are an important part of the Réunionese cultural identity. We have seen also that the lower class reveals that they are more close to the Réunionese and Creole identity cultural identity by having the strongest percentage in term of music, participating to Kabar or the favour of a flag to represent

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<sup>15</sup> See the work of Desormiers, B. (1996).

<sup>16</sup> Gilbert, P. (1996) 'Les Jeunes Réunionnais et la Culture Rap', in Cherubini, B., ed. *Regards sur le Champ Musical*, St André: Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines, Université de La Réunion, p 106

<sup>17</sup> See Desormiers, B. (1996) and Cohen, P. (1996).

<sup>18</sup> Desormiers, 1996: 40.

Réunion. As defined in table 4.27 the lower class is mainly represented by Kaf but also Métis, Petit Blanc and Malbar.

### 5.3 Religion and death

It is undeniably true that all these ethnic groups came to Réunion at the same time during slavery and after its aftermath. These ethnic groups arrived with their particular religions, rites and beliefs. These religions have coexisted for several centuries in the island. There are not a lot of books concerning to the cult of death in Réunion and it cannot be ascertained scientifically if Réunionnais are closed to their death or not. Among the respondents to the questionnaire, there is a particular form of devotion about death and few would dispute the claim that there is a high level of the cult of death, which is surely very old. Maybe this is from the Malagasy tradition for adoring the dead. From the findings it can be said that the Réunionese have a close relationship with their deaths, a type of fidelity. This adoration has been put forward now from the music and dance: Maloya. It was originally a dance, which avowed to honour dead people to communicate with the spirits and the gods and recur today in the *Servis Maligast*. This is a religious festival of Malagasy origin, adopted and creolised by some Kaf, Métis and Malbar. As for specifically when these ethnic groups arrived in the island one may observe that each ethnic group kept their religious culture.

Slaves from Africa and Madagascar conserved their ancestral cults and other animism beliefs, though many have died out. For instance, the Zarab still believe in the genius that supposedly chases away the bad spirits. The Chinese continued their religions, especially the cult of ancestors by going to the Temple. Hindus have always

honoured a God in their private and public Temple. I will explain later why the Chinese Buddhist and Tamil Hindus <sup>19</sup> are also Catholics, as a second religion, and not Muslims. These beliefs and religious practices are very popular, particularly in going to the cemetery on the 1 November, as compared to France or any European country. First of all let us understand why there is a close relationship between religion, tradition and death. In the study of Ronan Le Coadic <sup>20</sup> regarding the death of the French Britannia identity, in Réunion the cult of death is not linked only to the Catholic religion but also and especially to the Malagasy beliefs. From all this it follows that in Réunion there is a plurality of rites and beliefs which follows the historical evolution of the island, in parallel to the immigration wave. All in all there is a great amount of spiritual beliefs. I have said that the death can influence the living and that there is therefore a relationship between death and people who are still alive. In Réunion it is believed that the souls <sup>21</sup> of bad people who die, or simply people who die in suffering remain on earth. They are generally in the places such as forests, cross-roads and old houses. These are generally based on the beliefs of Christians, in particular the Kaf, Malbar, Métis and some Petit Blanc.

Regarding the results of the survey one should not forget the proximity of the events. In Réunion everybody lives relatively close together in a relatively small geographical space (70kms on 65kms, it takes 4 hours to make a round trip by car). One

<sup>19</sup> In Réunion, this religion is almost always practice by people from the South of India and these are normally Tamils. That why so many people referred to Hinduism as Tamil Indian. In the popular use there is a confusion between a generally accepted and internally used word Hinduism and the practice of this religion on the island which is often referred to as Tamoul (Tamil). The Malbar and Tamoul practice this same religion. We have to be clear that Tamoul (Tamil) is the culture or identity from Tamil Nadu region, Hinduism is somebody who practice the religion Hinduism and Indian is a person coming from India.

<sup>20</sup> Le Coadic, R. (1998). *Identité Bretonne*, Terre de Brume Éditions, PUR: Rennes.

<sup>21</sup> *Bon et mal çà me*



can see have from the survey that almost everybody lives in the same place that they were born<sup>22</sup>.

From this questionnaire and from my experience living in Réunion it would seem this phenomenon is specifically Réunionese. The frequentation of the cemetery, the All Saint's Day celebration, the discussion topic of death and the ancient, the pictures in the house, and other religious festivals are particularly well-attended and this is becoming the case more and more with the *Servis Maligagé* and Hindu ceremonies. This signifies that people are very close to each other and have very strong relationship it could be family and friend. But in my opinion it is specially a great respect and a last sign of devotion to their deceased relatives. Durkheim asserts that 'if religion has given birth to all that is essential in society, it is because the idea of society is the soul of religion'.<sup>23</sup> Do the Réunionese practise the cult of the death more than other French Département? Does the cult of death represent the past and native country or ancestors? It should be established that religion plays an important role in the Réunionese 'collective conscience' and 'collective identity'. Does this mean that there is also a collective belief amongst all the ethnic groups?

In this survey I asked one question regarding religion ('Could you tell me which religions you follow: one or two or three?') and two questions regarding death ('Do you go to the cemetery on the first of November?'). Let us see in detail below the result of cross-tabulations from the survey regarding the cult of Death made in Réunion.

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<sup>22</sup> See Insee Census 1999

<sup>23</sup> Durkheim, E. 1976. *Elementary forms of the Religious Life*. London: Allen & Unwin. p. 419

**Table 5.44: Are you going to the cemetery on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November?**

	Are you going to the cemetery on the 1 <sup>st</sup> of November?	
	Frequency	Valid %
<b>Yes</b>	373	55.2
<b>No</b>	228	33.7
<b>Yes but less than before</b>	75	11.1
<b>Total</b>	676	100.0

Let us be clear that Réunionese society is a very religious society especially if we include in this result the Buddhists, the Hindus and Islam believers from 15 years old to 49 years old and even those who do not believe in any religion at all according to this table 5.44. This brings us to the question of whether religion is part of Réunionese tradition in everyday life? Let us see who specifically goes the cemetery on All Saint's Day (1<sup>st</sup> November each year)?

**Table 5.45: Are you going to the cemetery on 1 November? / Age groups**

Are you going to the cemetery?	15-29	30-39	40-49
<b>Yes</b>	49.9	60.1	59.6
<b>No</b>	38.8	26.4	33.1
<b>Yes but less than before</b>	11.4	13.5	7.3
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

As we can see in the table 5.45 above tradition is not proper to the elderly generation. This is an extraordinary phenomenon it would appear that the older one is, the more likely it is that one goes to the cemetery. There could be several reasons for this. First of all one needs to ask whether they are all Catholics or possibly belong to Comorien and Islamic religion. An other reason is that at that time of the year, 1 November which is a bank holiday, most of the youth go out clubbing or party on the 31 of October. In Réunion during the few weeks before All Saint's Day, people are a bit scared of going out, especially on the evening before the event. In the collective unconscious this is 'forbidden' by the parents and the population in general. The youth are probably too

tired on the following day to go to the cemetery and church, which is usually in the morning. At lunchtime there is a celebration of this event in most Réunionese homes.

The percentage is still high compared to France in all respects. Also if compared with the work of Ronan Le Coadic<sup>24</sup> regarding French Britannia. Let us see now the next part concerning gender.

**Table 5.46: Are you going to the cemetery on the first of November? / Gender**

	Are you going to the cemetery on 1 November?	
	Men	Women
Yes	53.8	56.5
No	36.0	31.6
Yes but less than before	37	11.9
Total	100.0	100.0

The results on table 5.46 for each gender are similar with only a slight difference for the women. I observe the same tendency is revealed if I compare with the age that women and men go quite a lot to the cemetery on the 1 November. Next part I will see specifically which religions attend to this Catholic event?

**Table 5.47: What is your main religion? / Are you going to the cemetery on the 1 November?**

Which is your religion?	Are you going to the cemetery on 1 November?		
	Yes	No	Yes but less than before
Catholicism	94.5	54.1	84.9
Hinduism	2.2	3.4	8.2
Islam	0.3	22.2	
Buddhism		0.5	
None	2.7	17.4	4.1
Other	0.3	2.4	2.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>24</sup> J.-C. Coedic, R. (1998). *L'Identité Bretonne*. Rennes: Presse Universitaires de Rennes

This brings us to the question of whether it means that they are going less than before due to their 'new cultural identity'? Is it a rediscovery of their original religion? The group who does not have any religion is particularly interesting in that 18.03% of them go to the cemetery on 1 November and if one adds the ones who still go but less than before, 27.86% of them go according to table 5.47. 12.5% of those who have another religion also go to the cemetery and in total 37.5% go but less than before. It is undoubtedly true that religion and the cult of death is an important part of the Réunionese tradition.

**Table 5.48: Which is your second religion? / Are you going to the cemetery on 1 November?**

Which is your second religion?	Are you going to the cemetery on 1 November?		
	Yes	No	Yes but less than before
Catholic		9.0	
Hinduism	75.0	45.5	25.0
Islam			50.0
Buddhism	25.0	45.5	25.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

What is quite interesting here in this table 5.48 is that there Catholicism is rare as a second religion: only two of them. It would be reasonable to assume that the Catholic religion is dominant. People who have two or three religions list the Catholic religion first and then the dominated religion. First of all let us try to understand, the Catholic religion was the religion of the master and the coloniser: The religion of the government and the State and then the religion of the white metropolitan French. Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Animism were the religions of the slaves, the indentured labours and the mass of the people. Out of the two people who are Catholic as a second religion only one attends the ceremony, but less than before. Compared with those who are Hindu as a second religion, 73.5% of them go to the cemetery for All Saint's day and

85.2% in total still go but less than before. 57.1% of Buddhist go to the cemetery. Added to this who still go, the rate reaches 64.2%. The two who list Islam as second religion claim that they go but less than before. This is logical if we take their beliefs into consideration. Only one person who lists Hinduism as a third religion and one who lists Islam as a third religion go to the cemetery for All Saints Day. The other three do not go to the cemetery for All Saints Day at all. What we are concerned with here is how this Catholic tradition came to be the tradition and has been adopted by other people who practise other religions simultaneously even those who are not Catholic go to the cemetery on All Saints Day.

**Table 5.49: What is your main religion / Age groups?**

What is your main religion	Age groups?		
	15-29	30-39	40-49
<b>Catholicism</b>	79.4	80.8	90.0
<b>Hinduism</b>	3.3	4.0	1.3
<b>Islam</b>	10.5	6.1	3.3
<b>Buddhism</b>			0.7
<b>None</b>	5.9	8.1	4.1
<b>Other</b>	1.0	1.0	1.3
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

Among the target 15-29, 79.4% list Catholic, 3.3% Hindus and 10.5% Islam as their main religion. In this target group Buddhism is not listed as a first religion. Added to that 5.9% of them do not have a religion and 1.0% have an other religion. Regarding the target 30-39, 80.8% of them are Catholic, 4.0% Hinduism, 6.1% Muslim. There is also no 30-39 who list Buddhism as a main religion. There are also 8.1% who do not have any religion and 1.0% of them have an other religion. The group 40-49, 90.0% are Catholic, 1.3% Hindus, 3.3% Islam and 0.6% Buddhist. One may also observe that

7.3% of this age group do not have a main religion and 1.3% of the 41-50 years old have an other religion.

**Table 5.50: What is your second religion? / Age groups?**

Which is your second religion	Age groups?		
	15-29	30-39	40-49
Catholicism	3.3	6.3	
Hinduism	64.5	68.7	60.0
Islam	3.2		20.0
Buddhism	29.0	25.0	20.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

It is often said in Réunion that people practise two and sometimes even three religions. The survey revealed that 6.3% of the total population have a second religion. Similarly 0.6% of the Réunionese population have three religions. 0.7% of people who already have a first religion have a third religion. 9.6% of people who already have a second religion have a third religion. Of the 15-29 group, 3.3% list Catholic as second religion, 64.5% Hindus, 3.2% Islam and 29.0% Buddhist. Among the '30-39' group, 6.3% of them are Catholic, 68.7% are Hindus and 25.0% Buddhist. None were Islam in the '30-39' group of the survey. Regarding the last group 40-49, we can notice that there are no Catholics in this survey. Of the 40-49, 60.0% are Hindu, 25.0% Islam and 25.0% are Buddhist. Finally respondents with a third religion is composed were as follows: 66.7% of 15-29 group are Hindu and 33.3% are Muslim. Regarding the target 30-39, 50.0% of them are Islam and 50.0% have another religion.

Syncretism is becoming more and more prevalent among the 15-29 age group. Métissage and cross-weddings are more common than before, when the Catholic religion was imposed. Hindus commonly have a second and third religion. The Chinese respondents in particular have a second religion and the Muslims less so. Hinduism is

7.3% of this age group do not have a main religion and 1.3% of the 41-50 years old have an other religion.

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Buddhism	29.0	25.0	20.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

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the most representative religion as a second and third religion followed by Buddhism. Islam is seldom a second or third religion. We will see later the comparison with how people define themselves and their religion.

Returning to the previous results, if one takes into consideration the history of the Zarab, they are the latest ethnic group to arrive in Réunion, a century ago. They are the only ethnic group who kept the original culture which is a kind of independence on their cultural religion. Since they first arrived they could keep their original religion and practise their culture because they had 'economic and financial independence' as traders and businessmen. However to get married to a Muslim person you have to convert to Islam religion which is not compulsory in other religions. Added to that at the time that the Zarab group arrived in Réunion, the French government and the colonial society were less rigid regarding the conversion into Catholic religion.

The history of the Chinese is different from the Zarab. They were already in Réunion during the 1840s to work on the silk culture, then as agricultural technicians and finally started to open corner shops. They converted to Catholicism to facilitate integration, but maintained their own religion simultaneously. The Chinese ethnic group already held a mixture of Confucianist, Taoist and Buddhist beliefs at the time of their arrival in Réunion. This is similar to the case of the Hindu religion: Indians from Southern India came from different parts of India (Malbar, Bengal, Calcutta and Pondichery), these people brought their own religions, beliefs and rites. Malbar were also forced to adopt the Catholic religion. The North-West Indians, the Zarab and Malbar came to 'replace' the Kaf as indentured labourers in sugar-cane fields. When they arrived in the 1830s and en masse in the 1950s, Malbar did not have the economic



power of the Zarab, so they could not be culturally and religiously independent. However, all these different Southern Indians continue to practice a mixture of these Hindu, beliefs and religious cultures, giving birth to the Malbar religion. They are now called Tamoul. The cult of ancestors and, the cult of death has strong presence in these religions. Next we see in which regions people are very strong believers. Let us divide the island into four micro-regions: North, East, South and West.

**Table 5.51: Are you going to the cemetery on 1 November? / Regions**

Region	North	East	South	West
<b>Going to the cemetery?</b>				
<b>Yes</b>	57.0	56.2	51.5	57.8
<b>No</b>	28.9	31.4	37.8	34.1
<b>Yes but less than before</b>	14.1	12.4	10.7	8.1
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In the North region of Réunion 71.1% go to the cemetery, including the ones who go less than before. In the West 57.8% still go to the cemetery and 8.1% of the total go less than before. In the South 51.5% go, 62.2% altogether still go to the cemetery. 57.8% of the population living in the East region will go to the cemetery. Adding those who go less than before the total reaches 65.9%. I also compared the cities in the Highlands and the cities in the Lowlands. It is not surprising in the Highlands 56.3% go to the cemetery. Adding those who go less than before brings the percentage to 70.2%. In the Lowlands: 54.4% who go to cemetery on 1 November or 65.7% in total if we include those who go less than before. These results include all the religions. Let us now exclude the Islam religion (Zarab, Comoriens and Mahorais) from the calculation. One can see in the Lowlands that 58.7% go to the cemetery, 70.8% including those who go less than before. It is more or less the same rate and it is even higher than in the Highlands. It has always been popular belief in Réunion that tradition is predominantly in the Highlands

and in the South. If we look at the results we cannot really see any differences. Let's have a look in the South. I can notice for example that in the South, excluding Islam, data that 55.5% go to the cemetery and 69.0% go to the cemetery on the 1 November but less than before. This is four percent higher than the result including Islam religion. Roughly the same percentage is found in all regions of Réunion, no real difference exists according to the micro-region.

**Table 5.52: Are you going to the cemetery on the 1 November? / How do you define yourself? (%)**

	+ —										
	Kaf	Chinois	Petit Blanc	Métis	Malbar	Others	Gros Blanc	Zorey	Zarah	Malgache	Comorien Mahorais
Yes	71.6	64.3	63.5	60.9	58.6	55.6	47.1	23.3	7.1		
No	19.4	25.0	19.8	28.6	27.3	28.8	35.3	69.9	89.3	80.0	100.0
Less than before	9.0	10.7	16.7	10.5	14.1	16.7	17.6	6.8	3.6	20.0	100.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to table 5.52 almost two thirds of the Chinese (Buddhist) and more than half of the Malbar (Hindu) go to the cemetery on 1 November even if this date is not in their religious calendar. Here again the Kaf, the Petit Blanc and Métis most commonly go to the cemetery. Compared to the Zorey, from the French mainland, one can see that they do not often take part in this Catholic religious event. Obviously the Malgache, Comorien and Mahorais do not go to the cemetery on 1 November since it is not part of their religion and they are the new migrants to Réunion.

Next, I wish to focus my attention on this result, which is quite important to understand syncretism of beliefs. One could see through this survey how the Kaf mix Catholics events with their original beliefs. The cult of the deaths and ancestors through the descendants of Afro-Malgache has become a tradition among Réunionese society taking for instance the high percentage of the Petit Blanc, but, Petit Blanc were Catholic

believers from the outset. Once again the Kaf group go to the cemetery on 1 November more than the other group. One can say this is possibly due to greater respect for the dead which still exists in the Afro-Malagasy tradition.

One should make a comparison between slavery and religion. The Catholic religion especially which was imposed by the Code Noir, would have been helpful at this difficult time. As far as we know, slaves were suffering in this period, kept from their homeland, shipped to the island, they were left with strange people in a new land, and possibly could not understand the language of the other ethnic groups. So a slave may have adopted a religion as a source of reference. Durkheim makes this point graphically by saying that 'the man who has obeyed his god and who, for this reason, believes the god is with him, approaches the world with confidence and with the feeling of an increased energy.'<sup>21</sup> This function as a solution to avoid the suffering of everyday life of that period.

**Table 5.53: Are you going to the cemetery on the 1 November? / Monthly income? (%)**

	750 €	751-1500 €	1501-2300 €	2301-3050 €	3051-4580 €	4581-6100 €	+ 6100 €	No Answer	Total
Yes	62.3	63.6	53.8	42.2	44.1	53.3	31.3	54.5	54.6
No	22.1	24.3	39.6	42.2	44.1	46.7	32.5	33.7	34.1
Less than before	15.6	12.1	6.6	15.7	11.8	6.2	6.2	11.8	11.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.53 shows that the lower class goes more to the cemetery on the 1 November than the Middle and Upper Class.

<sup>21</sup> Durkheim, 1979: 269

**Table 5.54: Which is your main religion? / How do you define yourself? (%)**

	Petit Blanc	Gros Blanc	Métis	Chinois	Kaf	Malbar	Others	Zorey	Malgache	Zarab	Mahorais	Comorien	Total
Catholic	98.9	94.1	93.7	92.9	89.3	71.6	70.6	67.1	40.0	7.1			80.3
Hindu			0.8		0.7	18.9				0.7			3.3
Islam			0.8		1.3	6.3	5.9	1.4	20.0	1.3	100.0	100.0	7.8
Buddhist						6.3		1.4					0.2
None	1.1	5.9	4.0	7.1	8.0		17.6	27.1		8.0			7.2
Other			0.8		0.7	2.1	5.9	2.9	40.0	0.7			1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.54 reveals that Catholicism is the principle religion in Réunion. We can see here that the syncretism is more common amongst the Chinois, Kaf and Malbar groups. Mahorais and Comorien are not involved in this syncretism.

**Table 5.55: Which is your second religion? / How do you define yourself? (%)**

	Malbar	Métis	Kaf	Chinois	Zarab	Total
Catholic	5.6	42.9				2.1
Hindu	83.3		100.0			63.8
Islam	5.6	57.1				4.3
Buddhist	5.6			100.0	100.0	29.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to table 5.55, Hindu is the main second religion in Réunion and it confirms the results of table 5.54. All these groups in this table 5.55 are the forced migrants from slavery and colonialism time. These groups were forced also to convert themselves to Catholic religion.

**Table 5.56: Which is your third religion? / How do you define yourself? (%)**

	Métis	Kaf	Total
Hindu		50.0	40.0
Islam	100.0	25.0	40.0
Other		25.0	20.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

In table 5.56 we can see amongst those who have a third religion it happens only in Métis and Kaf groups.

**Table 5.57: Which is your main religion? / Monthly income? (%)**

	750 €	751-1500 €	1501-2300 €	2301-3050 €	3051-4580 €	4581-6100 €	+ 6100 €	No Answer	Total
<b>Catholic</b>	82.2	84.8	72.3	70.0	87.7	75.9	66.7	81.8	79.5
<b>Hindu</b>	5.5	4.8	2.0	3.8				4.0	3.4
<b>Islam</b>	11.0	3.6	13.9	8.8	3.5	10.3	6.7	7.1	7.8
<b>Buddhist</b>				1.3					0.2
<b>None</b>		5.5	9.9	15.0	7.0	13.8	26.6	6.1	7.9
<b>Other</b>	1.3	1.1	2.0	1.1	1.8			1.0	1.3
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5.57 shows that catholic religion is the main religion for all social classes. The Catholic religion is stronger amongst lower class and less in the upper class. But in the same time those who belong to upper class according to table 4.27 are the Zarab, Zorey, Chinois and Gros Blanc. Without the Zarab and Zorey groups the percentage in the upper class would have been the same or even stronger than in the lower class.

**Table 5.58: Which is your second religion? / Monthly income? (%)**

	750 €	751-1500 €	1501-2300 €	2301-3050 €	3051-4580 €	4581-6100 €	+ 6100 €	No Answer	Total
<b>Catholic</b>				20.0					2.3
<b>Hindu</b>	66.7	66.7	71.4	60.0		100.0		75.0	63.6
<b>Islam</b>	16.7							12.5	4.5
<b>Buddhist</b>	16.6	33.3	28.6	20.0	100.0		100.0	12.5	29.5
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

We can see here in table 5.58 that syncretism happen more in the lower class and middle class than the upper class.

**Table 5.59: Which is your third religion? / Monthly income? (%)**

	750 €	751-1500 €	Total
<b>Hindu</b>		66.7	40.0
<b>Buddhist</b>	50.0	33.3	40.0
<b>Other</b>	50.0		20.0
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

The results of table 5.59 confirm our analysis in table 5.58 regarding syncretism processes.

### 5.31 *Conclusion*

What conclusions can be drawn from this? First of all let us try to understand in looking at which religious and ethnic groups are going to attend this event. I notice a difference between the three age groups. It must be acknowledged that the 15-29 age brackets is more *métis* than the others, there is a *métissage* of ethnic origins and therefore a syncretism of religions which happens more in lower and middle classes. They are also less Catholic and more Westernised by French influences. So it would appear that the 15-29 year-olds have the opportunity to 'choose' their religious identity. The total percentage is so high that it definitely forms part of the Réunionese tradition to attend these religious events, but for how much longer?

The tendency to go to the cemetery for All Saint's Day starts to decrease slightly in the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups. Is this really due to the Westernisation of the society? It follows that gaining economic and financial power will decrease religious practice and beliefs. One can take the example of the Muslims and middle and upper class Catholics. This Western collective conscious causes a dwindling in numbers of Catholics, as is the case in Europe. A number of key questions arise: is the Catholic religion becoming old-fashioned? Are people searching for another religion after being disappointed by this religion? But again as seen in the results the percentage is too high to talk about this kind of phenomenon. It would also appear that there is a reconstruction of religious identity among the Hindus. But the truth is that Hindus are trying to regain former religious identities. The upper and middle-class in contrast to Islam. It seems that Malbar are more and more conscious of their 'second' religion and reject Catholicism.

The results of my survey suggest that there is a strong relationship between religion, death and identity. The ceremonies of the cult of death are not only religious but also linked to the tradition of the inhabitants. The cult of ancestors has been seen and studied in other islands and we can see some resemblances to other places such as Haiti with Haitian Voodoo Culture,<sup>26</sup> and Papua Guinea<sup>27</sup> or the San Pascualito Rey with the cult of death in Chiapas.<sup>28</sup> Death is very much present in the mind of the Réunionnais. They are faithful to the beliefs of the death. Real people who have died, for instance Sitarane who died 90 years ago and Mme Desbassins who died 150 years ago, they have become legends. In the same way, a fictional character, Grand Mer Kal, has become a folk legend connected with darkness and death. Death is also related to a volcano which comes from the earth. A great number of people go to church on Saturday and Sunday. There is a great number of people who clean up the tombs and graves before All Saint's Day and throughout the year. The best way of summing up is that poverty is related to religion and beliefs according to my survey. When people have economic, financial, moral or physical difficulties they are more likely to be religious. In contrast the more economic and financial power one has, the less likely one is to be religious. This may be since money leads to individualism and people rely on themselves, rather than a 'God'. The practice of affiliation to more than one religion would appear to be nowadays a phenomenon linked to social class: the lower, working and middle class will have multiple religions more often than the upper class, as demonstrated in the survey. The lower class is also the most 'religious'.

<sup>26</sup> Laguerre, M. (1989). *Voodoo and Politics*. New York: St-Martin's Press.

<sup>27</sup> Lattas, A. (1998). *Cultures of Secrecy, Reincarnating Race in Bush Kaliai Cargo Cults*. WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

<sup>28</sup> See Metcalf, P. and Huntington, R. (1991) *Celebrations of death: the Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. See also Pearson, M. P. (1999) *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*. Texas: Texas A&M University Press.

And Ahern, E. (1973). *The Cult of the Dead in a Chinese Village*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

#### 5.4 Ethnic definition and affiliation

The last issue that I will address for this questionnaire is ethnic definition. In Chapter 4, I gave the percentage and numbers of people who define themselves as part of a group, shown in Table 4.5. The current issue will be analyzed after having asking the respondents how they define the origins of their parents? In this part of the survey we are going to see how people define themselves in terms of ethnicity and if it is necessarily linked with their parent's ethnic background. First of all we consider those who define themselves as Petit Blanc.

Among the 135 Petit Blanc, the survey revealed 57.6% who define themselves as Petit Blanc have both parents with Petit Blanc background. 33.0% of Petit Blanc have one Petit Blanc parent. So they are biologically métis but define themselves as Petit Blanc. Usually, they have a Petit Blanc mother. 8.5% of the Petit Blanc do not have both Petit Blanc parents background. 6.7% of the Petit Blanc have father Métis and mother Petit Blanc.

Among 158 Kaf, 47.8% who define themselves as Kaf effectively have both parents with Kaf background. 40.1% of Kaf have one Kaf parent. So once again they are biologically Métis but define themselves as Kaf first. 11.1% of respondents do not have a Kaf background but do define themselves as Kaf, they are Métis from another mix of backgrounds. In this case it is usually the father who is Kaf. 0.8% define themselves as Kaf but have parents with 'Other' background.

Turning now to consider the Zorey, we see that among the 74 Zorey, 76.6% who define themselves as Zorey have both parents of Zorey background. 11.66% who are biologically Métis define themselves as Zorey and have one Zorey parent. 3.3% define



themselves Zorey when neither parent is Zorey and 8.3% have parents of Other background but define themselves as Zorey. People who define themselves as Zorey usually have a Zorey father rather than mother.

Next, we consider the Malbar group among the 99 Malbar, 48.0% who define themselves as Malbar have parents of Malbar background. 50.0% define themselves as Malbar have only one parent with Malbar background, they are biologically Métis. Only 1.9% of Métis who define their parents as Métis define themselves as Malbar. Once again many more people who define themselves as Malbar have a Malbar father rather than mother. What about the Gros Blanc, how do they define themselves?

Among the 17 Gros Blanc, 61.1% who define themselves as Gros Blanc have both parents of Gros Blanc origin. 28.5% who define themselves as Gros Blanc have one Gros Blanc parent and are biologically Métis. 9.5% who do not have any Gros Blanc background define themselves as Gros Blanc. There are more people defined as Gros Blanc by the father than the mother. Let us next consider the first Muslim group in Réunion.

Among the 28 Zarab, 80.0% who define themselves as Zarab have both parents of Zarab background. 15.0% who define themselves as Zarab have at least one parents of Zarab background and are Métis. 5.0% define themselves as Zarab when neither parent is Zarab. More people are Malbar by their father than by their mother. What about the second Muslim group from Comoro archipelagos?

Among the seven who define themselves as Comorien 87.5% have parents of Comorien background. 6.2% of Comorien who are biologically Métis have one Comorien parent. 6.2% have no Comorien background but define themselves as

Comorien. More people who consider themselves Comorien have a Comorien father. Let us see next how the Chinois group define themselves.

Among the 28 who define themselves as Chinois 86.6% have both parents of Chinois origins. 6.6% of the Chinois have at least one Chinois parent and are biologically Métis. 6.6% who are 100% Métis define themselves as Chinois. Once again this is mainly determined by the Chinese origin of the father. Let us see now how the Mahorais define themselves.

Among the seven who define themselves as Mahorais 90.0% have got Mahorais parents. 10% who define themselves as Mahorais have one Mahorais parent. Again the origin of the father was more influential than that of the mother in the definition of the self. Let us see now who define themselves as Malgache.

Among the five who define themselves as Malgache 44.4% have Malgache parents. 22.2% have either a mother or father of Malgache origins. 33.3% do not have Malgache parents but define themselves as Malgache. Here the background of the father has the same level of influence as that of the mother. Let us next look at the results from the Métis respondents.

Among the 135 who claim to be Métis, 25.4% say that their parents were already Métis. 30.2% of people who define themselves as Métis have one Métis parent. 38.3% who claim to be Métis are biologically Métis and have parents from different ethnic backgrounds. 5.0% say that they are Métis but their parents have the same background as they do. Let us see in detail the people who have the parents of the same ethnic background and define themselves as Métis: Four Métis have Kaf parents, one has Zorey parents, two Métis have Malbar parents, three have Petit Blanc parents, four

Métis have Malgache parents and one has parents of Other background. They are what Jean-Loup Amselle calls 'Branchements' in a state of métissage. Apart from that there are fifty-one Métis (37.8%) who are from a genuine biological and syncretic métissage.

We can also see from the table below that some respondents have parents from the same ethnic origins but define themselves as Others: one Other has Kaf parents, four Others have Zorey parents.

Among the nineteen defined as Others, we can see that 50.9% have Others parents. 41.2% others have a biological Métissage. 0.3% claimed to be Métis and have both parents defined as Others. Surprisingly, here we notice that the definition of Métis is based more on the mother's background than the father's. 50.98% who define themselves as Others have both parents as Others. 35.2% are biologically Métis but define themselves as Others. 13.7% who define themselves as Others have parents of the same background. The definition of Others is also based on the ethnic background of the father more than the Mother.

Below are three different tables regarding the definition of self in terms of ethnic identity, according to the percentage of people who define themselves in the same ethnic identity group as the mother or father.

1. 87.5% of Comorien
2. 86.6% of Chinois
3. 80.0% of Mahorais
4. 80.0% of Zarab
5. 76.6% of Zorey
6. 61.1% of Gros Blanc
7. 57.6% of Petit Blanc
8. 50.9% of Others
9. 48.0% of the Malbar
10. 47.8% of Kaf
11. 44.4% of the Malgache
12. 25.4% of Métis

It was always thought that the Gros Blanc group was the least mixed. We notice here that they are effectively the least Métis group but we also notice that more and more Gros Blanc are inter-marrying. This may be because of 'impoverishment' which causes some of them to marry into other groups. It would appear that the Chinois are not really mixed. We should not forget that the Comorien, the Mahorais, the Malgache and the Zarab are less Métis groups. First of all this is due to religious barriers (Islam) but the Comorien and Mahorais groups in particular are stigmatised and are at the bottom of the social scale, more so than the Kaf. It appears to be frowned upon to marry into one of these three groups the latest groups to emigrate to Réunion. On the other hand we can see for instance that the Malbar and the Kaf exhibit the most biological 'métissage' by the difficulty to define themselves. Less than half of the group claim to have the same ethnic identity as their parents.

Let us see next the percentage of people who have either a mother or father of the same ethnic identity group and define themselves in the same identity ethnic group:

1. 50.0% of Malbar
2. 40.1% of Kaf
3. 33.0% of Petit Blanc
4. 35.2% of Others
5. 30.2% of Métis
6. 28.5% of Gros Blanc
7. 22.2% of Malgache
8. 15.0% of Zarab
9. 11.6% of Zorey
10. 6.6% of Chinois
11. 6.6% of Mahorais
12. 6.2% of Comorien

According to this survey once again we notice that the Malbar and the Kaf define themselves by the ethnic identity of a single parent. It is like a choice of identity they

made by their own definition. As we see on this table for the first three groups, whatever ethnicity is defined as that of one of your parents. Here we can be sure that the cultural value specificities of everyday life play a great role in the definition of self. Even for the Other and Métis groups definition is quickly decided. In Réunion, nowadays 'Métissage' has become more and more an apology for not representing oneself in any particular group. In the contrast to the previous table we see that the groups who were in first position are now logically in last position in the table above. This is due to lack of inter-marriage in these groups for the same reasons as above.

Let us see next the percentage of people who have the same background as their parents but define themselves differently to them and adopt another ethnic identity group:

1. 33.3% of Malgache
2. 16.9% of Métis
3. 13.7% of Others
4. 11.1% of Kaf
5. 9.5% of Gros Blanc
6. 8.5% of Petit Blanc
7. 6.6% of Chinois
8. 6.6% of Mahorais
9. 6.2% of Comorien
10. 5.0% of Zarab
11. 3.3% of Zorey
12. 1.9% of Malbar

What is interesting here is how people decide to define themselves differently to their parents' background. Regarding the Malgache with its 33.3%, even with a small number of target that Malgache is part of their identity. The Others group is special because these people know their parent's ethnic group exactly but define themselves as Other. They do not want to be categorised or mixed with other ethnic groups in Réunion whether or not they were born in Réunion. They are the individuals who define

themselves as 'citizens of the World' and do not want to recognise their ethnic origins. The people who define themselves as Kaf but are not Kaf are very interesting to study more closely. Kaf is (or used to be) very stigmatised in Réunion and people who define themselves as Kaf could be seen to be in the same position and be oppressed. Paradoxical though it may seem, we notice that people who claim to be Gros Blanc do not have Gros Blanc parents. Is this because they do not know what Gros Blanc means? Perhaps we can analyse it on a different point of view. In this case we have to look at it in definition of class. To be a Gros Blanc means to have a high quality of life and to reach the superior class. However, it may be asserted that it is not a surprise that to be a Malbar, Zorey or Zarab you must have the same 'blood' ethnics background otherwise you cannot define yourself as one of this group. This is a typical hard definition of the community and to enter into this community.

#### 5.41 Conclusion

As in Labache <sup>29</sup> thesis, my findings show that the 'youth' group define themselves as more 'Métis' than the other group. This age group is definitely more 'Métis' than the older groups and the society will become progressively more Métis. The 'Youth' group make more and more reference to Créolité and their African and Malagache origins. In cases where people have a non-Métis background but describe themselves as Métis or another ethnic group, Jean-Loup Amselle <sup>30</sup> terms this process as 'branchements'. He said that when we need some exterior reference we have to 'connect/start on'. He said that it is a normal and current process of construction of cultures and it is not lived as a

<sup>29</sup> Labache, I. (1997). *L'ethnité à la Réunion*. Sous la direction de J. Raveau. Thèse en Anthropologie Sociale. Paris: EHESS.

<sup>30</sup> Amselle, J.-L. (2001). *Branchements. Anthropologie de l'universalité des cultures*. Paris: Flammarion.

métissage. In Réunion the praise of métissage occurs more and more in the vocabulary of the civil society in describing Réunion as a peaceful society without any ethnic conflict. The definition of self is not really how you feel but also how you are seen in the society and how the people or the Other defines you. It is a representation from the other and a definition of your own feelings. In the case of métissage the self-definition and the representation of ethnic group is made according to the father's background except for the Métis group and the Petit Blanc group. In one case I notice that the respondent gave a definition of paternal lineage. This may be from the Chinese, Indian and African tradition of ethnic lineage. Ethnic identity becomes here a choice. They choose their identity according to the domination of the cultural values used in everyday life or the representation of other in your physical appearance and how people describe you. Denis-Constant Martin <sup>31</sup> serves to illustrate this choice of identity in asserting that we have 'the possibility of choosing to preserve and develop cultural specificities while explicitly relating them to universal knowledge and values'. He carries on to conclude in drawing our attention to the fact that:

'Identities are constructed and that the process of construction, which makes possible the utterance of an identity narrative, implies borrowing from the Other as well as "correcting" the past. In brief, the production and utterance of an identity narrative transforms the very group it means to preserve and defend.'<sup>32</sup>

Therefore in a multicultural society where there is much inter-marriage the definition given by people regarding their ethnic identity group or the self is made according to different choices: the specific cultural values and tradition, the social class, the representation given by the Other and the paternal lineage ethnic identity group

<sup>31</sup> Martin, D.-C. (1995). 'The Choices of Identity', *Social Identities*, Vol.1, n°1, p.17

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9

background. But we can also notice for the 'stigmatised' group there are less choices: you are whatever the Other defines you as.

### 5.5 General Conclusion to Chapters 4 and 5

The majority of respondents were proud of their Réunionese cultural identity, of their French nationality and citizenship and also of belonging to an Ultraperipheral European Region (RUP). Though the people of Réunion imagine their island as a 'nation', they do not want independence from France because they fear its economic consequences. However, they often confuse this with the island's autonomy which is a completely different matter.

As far as the fear of being independent is concerned, an illustrative episode occurred in 2002 with the debate on a separate flag for the island. This evoked a strong sentiment that the islanders do not want to be 'given up' by France. However, the question of Creole language shows that it is linked to the idea of revival of culture and identity. As pointed out in Chapter 3, this survey demonstrates that the language is transplanted and rooted into Creole culture. These data refute pro-French associations and pro-Départementalist Right wing. The pro-Départementalists either want to suppress the Creole language or to render it closer to French. The cultural activists are themselves divided on the definitive written form of the Creole language. There is conflict within the Creole speaking communities about how the language should be represented or recorded and this illustrates their fractured identity. There is also the issue of pro-Départementalists who propagate a French written form for Creole. Many cultural activists want to separate Creole writing from the French written form. Some are



content to leave the Creole language as a matter of private sphere at home, for conversations, for friends or for joking but accept that in the public sphere, and in law, the workplace, in public discourse and political life, they have to enter into the French world. The politics of this is complicated but a significant group appears quite relaxed with the thought that many people will enjoy a double linguistic identity: French in one context and Creole in another. Can one live with this dichotomy, or is it a dichotomy which will cause tensions and complexities in education, the social service and in terms of people's culture and identity?

According to my survey, the Creole language appears to be experiencing a cultural renaissance. This renaissance of culture rises from the resistance led by cultural activists. Their reactions have been provoked by the hegemony of metropolitan French culture in the public sphere during the period of Départementalisation. The valorisation of old cultural values and norms can become the symbol of a new identity. Among the forces which challenge the domination of the public sphere, the Creole language and Maloya are the main forms of resistance. Creole and Maloya are the two elements illustrating the choice to assert differences from the French. This finding appears particularly in the case of music. Réunionese Creole culture benefits most from media coverage in this area. The coverage of public personalities originating from Africa and Madagascar, Kabar Maloya and the growing success local bands and singers popularise and democratise alternative cultures. These cultures are becoming respected and the Kaf and Métis communities can affirm those habits which are part of their cultural identity.

Rather than a depreciated Creole language, one can see that there is a greater appreciation of the language by positive and affirmative initiatives. These actions are

lead by Réunionnais activists who have emigrated to France. These initiatives have been reinforced by the French educational authorities in allowing Creole language courses in some primary schools in the island and the launch of the study of poetry and literature in the Creole language. This is deemed very controversial by the pro-Départementalist and Right wing politicians.

Since 2003 a new degree at the University of Réunion, a BA in Creole language, has been instituted. The results of my survey show that speaking Creole for the Creole speaker does not mean the rejection of the French language or French. Furthermore, Réunionese people are open-minded as far as languages are concerned (they are interested in learning foreign languages, for example). The Creole language, like cultural identity itself, does not belong to a few academics or activists, but has been reclaimed by the people. The quest for identity needs the reassertion of language. Language is a fundamental element in the recognition of 'national' identity.

The Creole language is used more by the Kaf ethnic group than other groups. The association with a subordinate ethnic group leads to the stigmatisation of Creole. However, other ethnic groups, such as the Métis, Petit Blanc and Malbar also speak Creole with respect to the 'new migrants', the Mahorais claim to be more familiar, speak or understand more Creole language than the Comoriens. The Mahorais and the Comoriens (to a lesser degree) are more familiar with or make more use of Creole than the Zorey, Zarab and Chinese. In terms of gender, males are more familiar with Creole than females.

Those in the Highlands are more familiar with Creole than those living in the Lowlands. And, in general, the Highlands exhibit the 'Creole' mentality or mindset,

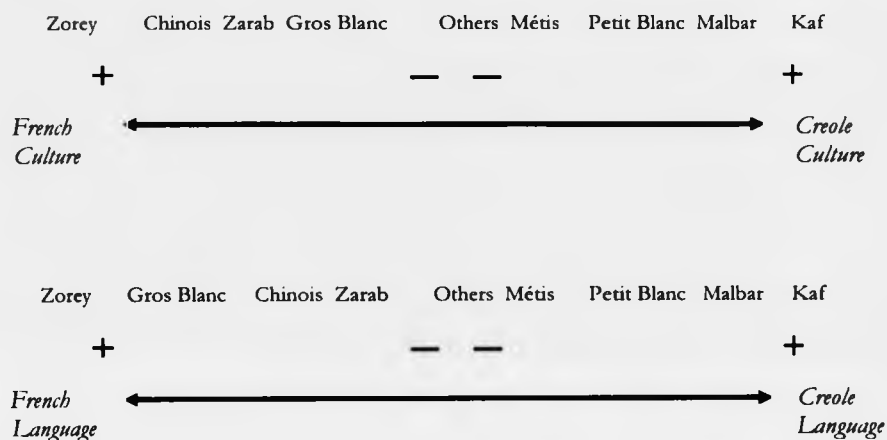
Creole life, Creole roots and Creole gastronomy, more than in the Lowlands. This difference will soon disappear and the Highlands will become more and more like the Lowlands.

There is an expression of Creole and Réunionese cultural identity through folk tales like *Gran Mer Kal* which is a public figure. Réunionese folk tales and legends are an important part of the Réunionese cultural identity. As seen in the survey there is a link between the social class and Réunionese and Creole identity: the lower and working class reveal that they are closer to the Réunionese and Creole cultural identity than middle and upper class by having the strongest percentage in terms of music, participating in *Kabar*, the favour of a flag to represent Réunion and all other issues. As seen in table 4.27 the lower and working class is represented by *Kaf*, *Petit Blanc*, *Métis* and *Malbar* and the upper class is represented by *Zorey*, *Zarab*, *Chinois* and *Gros Blanc*. In the middle class we find all the groups, which confirms my social rank in Chapter 3.8.

One can see that the *Zarab*, the Chinese and the *Gros Blanc* groups are totally disconnected from the rest of the groups in terms of Réunionese cultural identity and they are the groups that are closer to the *Zorey* group. Nevertheless the *Gros Blanc* are in most respects different to the *Zorey*. The survey revealed that the *Gros Blanc* group were more 'Creole' than expected. This constitutes the adoption of a Creole way of life in the private sphere. The Comorien and Mahorais seem to be closer to the *Kaf*, *Malbar*, *Petit Blanc* and *Métis* groups in terms of their social status. However, Comorien and Mahorais are not yet part of this 'Creole' culture.

In the figure below I draw a cultural and language scales in Réunion which are one of my main findings after analysing the result of my questionnaire.

Figure 5.1: Cultural and language scale in Réunion



In my questionnaire I acknowledged my main finding that Réunionese cultural identity is closely related to the dominated Kaf group. To be 'Réunionnais' and have a 'Creole' cultural identity means to be closer to the Kaf group and Kaf cultural identity. The other finding is that to be 'French' seems to be closer to the Zorey group and French cultural identity. One can see that in terms of all the measures of cultural identity studied in my survey: Creole language, music, folk tales, flag, customs, the Kaf ethnic group had the highest percentage in each case. The Kaf have started to claim this identity as part of their culture and the other ethnic groups, especially the Métis, the Malbar and the Petit Blanc are aligned.

The Métis group especially is often much closer to the Kaf group. This leads me to think that amongst the Métis there are some Kaf who do not want to define themselves as Kaf. The group 'Other' can include people who genuinely do not fall into the ethnic groups presented in the survey. Alternatively, they could be people who do not want to restrict themselves to any category. This group 'Other' gives answers closer to those of the Kaf, Malbar and Métis groups than the Zorey, Gros Blanc and Zarab groups. Therefore my hypothesis is that there is a negation of Kaf identity by the Métis and Other groups. There is a refusal to be defined as Kaf for several reasons explained before. On the one hand these slave descendants have, since the beginning of slavery, been differentiated from their ancestors by the elite. Several Kaf define themselves as Métis. On the other hand we can underline another explanation: in Réunion the idea of métissage and the peaceful co-existence between ethnic groups masks the underlying racism and inequality between ethnic groups present in the island. The Kaf are situated at the bottom of this social stratification. The Tourism Office of Réunion in 2003 renamed 'Rando Gadiamb'<sup>33</sup> as 'Rando Métisse'. This is now a celebration of métissage and everything from Africa that is usually stigmatised.

After analysing these results we can understand more fully why Réunionese music was stigmatised for years: Maloya was the most popular music, but it was the music of the Kaf, and to a lesser degree the Métis and Malbar. However, Kabar Maloya was equated solely to the Kaf, was forbidden, stigmatised, hidden and rejected in the public sphere. My questionnaire confirmed that Maloya and Kabar were most popular amongst the Kaf and Métis groups. Maloya also displayed the cultural elements of resistance, struggle and political opposition during the 1960s and 1970s. This music is recognised

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<sup>33</sup> *Rando* refers to hiking or riding in the mountain and *Gadiamb* is a pure Creole term meaning great.

more by the 15-29 and 30-39 age groups than the 40-49 age group. The 40-49 age group exhibits less Creole heritage than the 15-29 and 30-39 age groups. While the 15-29 and 30-39 year-old do understand the importance of Creole heritage to a greater degree, they use it less than the older group.

I can conclude that the older group has been more affected by the assimilation and alienation of *Départementalisation*. The young and adult generations are also more open to the 'world culture'. The old group are much closer to French culture. The fact that the young and adult groups are more 'Creolophone' is the result of the power relations between the public sphere of the French and the private sphere of the Réunionnais. The private sphere is where the Creole language was revived by cultural activists facing domination. Gradually, this resistance is moving more and more from the private sphere into the public sphere. The cultural activists have thus been more successful in constructing or reconstructing symbolical space for their views in the last few years.

With respect to regions, the East region is more 'Creole' than the others. I can say in general that males, the young and adult groups, the East region, the Kaf, Métis, Malbar and the Petit Blanc groups seem to be the most 'Creole' and to express the Réunionese cultural identity. Nevertheless, I also suggest that more Réunionnais are becoming bilingual compared to the generation before the 1980s where people could speak either Creole or French. Now it seems that the Réunionnais speak more than one language.

In my fieldwork, I noticed that the respondents had some difficulty in defining their ethnic affiliation. The definition of ethnic identity here becomes a choice. The population choose their identity according to the dominant cultural values and norms used in their daily lives. The choice is made in most cases according to paternal ethnic

origin. The choice of ethnic identity is also made according to the representation of the Other. The Other gives the external physical appearance. Through my survey, it can affirm that there is a strong Réunionese cultural identity in the private sphere in Réunion, which is beginning to be revealed in the public sphere. The population now exhibits less shame and less fear in confronting the French authorities.

The implications of current cultural identities in the social, economic and political fields in Réunion may be represented as a microcosm of the future multiethnic society in France, as well as in Europe. People in Réunion feel that they have a multiple identity. In fact, several sub-cultures and 'sub-identities' co-exist and all of these form the Creole and Réunionese identity and culture.

So far, support groups and associations have failed to deal with this issue. My results showed that more services have to be provided by cultural activist associations to the Réunionese people. Thus associations will have to mediate between communities, politics and the administration to move further in the quest for identity and to promote Réunionese culture.

In discussing music, I wish to argue that the Ségá is a matter of identity construction, in terms of its differences to the assimilationist and Départementalist discourse of the State. This results in lyrics which celebrate blue seas, yellow sun, insouciance and eroticism. By contrast, the Maloya is a matter of identity formation, marked by a more demanding spirit. It reflects a communist, autonomist and independent discourse. Maloya is an expression of frustration, anxiety and aggressiveness. Taking language into consideration the French language is a central part of the identity construction process. So too is the Creole language. Creole language

forms the basis of Réunionese culture, of the formation of Creole society and the present social creolisation. The Creole language plays a central role in all present phenomena in Réunion in terms of integration: those who speak Creole only have many social problems, do poorly at school and have a bad representation in the public sphere.

French identity follows from Réunionese statutes and rights. Nevertheless, today I notice that a mixing is taking place between the construction and formation of identity, according to my distinction in Chapter 2.4. Within the public sphere, identity construction prevails, whereas in the private sphere, identity formation is of greatest importance. I might therefore ask if there is, in fact, harmonisation of métissage and creolisation, since métissage cannot be experienced in isolation.

Albert Mémmi,<sup>34</sup> remarks that the majority does not merely impose its cultural law on the minority via any specifically disguised violence such as education, media, music or the Catholic religion. In particular, given that Réunion is a post-plantation society and not a post-industrial society, politics takes into account more specifically a past characterised by slavery which created trauma. Today the consequences are still visible when one examines the Réunionese population. I will not focus in any great detail here on the socio-economic problems, but the consequences of the extremely high unemployment rate (35.0%)<sup>35</sup> cannot be ignored. This inevitably causes high levels of stress, tension, alcoholic problems, domestic violence, sexual violence and murders. Can this violence be directly attributed to a shortage of work?

The conflict between masters and slaves during slavery has given way, then, to a class struggle masked by the screen based on colour ideological discourse. Behind the

<sup>34</sup> Mémmi, A. (1994). *Le racisme: description, définitions, traitement*. Paris: Gallimard.

<sup>35</sup> For 2000, see *Tableau Économique de La Réunion* (TER), l'édition 2003, St André.



alibi of colour, another drama becomes prominent: the one of maintenance of dependence and alienation. Identity is not rooted, rather it modifies all individual and group existence in relation to the crisis of the State: political crisis, economic crisis, social crisis and even 'cultural' crisis.

I wonder also if identity is cyclical? Is there a risk that Réunion will return to the interethnic relations of three hundred years ago?

From the results of the survey as a whole, I can see the phenomenon of reproduction<sup>36</sup> that reinforces Lucette Labache's<sup>37</sup> work. Again the same groups are in a position of advantage (the Gros Blanc, Zorey, Chinese, Zarab and some Métis) while the other groups remain disadvantaged (the Kaf, Petit Blanc, Malbar and some Métis and more recently the Mahorais and Comorien).

To sum up, these results confirm that Réunion shows evidence of a 'plural society' which, as M.G. Smith describes, does not function harmoniously. As Labache argues in her conclusion, each ethnic group can be seen to have their specificities.

Today Kaf and Réunionnais are attempting to reconstruct their black and Creole identity in the private and public sphere. This is relevant to their social reality. It is clear that the emergence of Creole language in the public sphere contrasts to the dominant symbolic life.

Some results of Chapters 4 and 5 will also be analysed in Chapter 6.

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<sup>36</sup> See Bourdieu, P. et J.-C. Passeron (1970). *La reproduction. Éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit.

<sup>37</sup> See Labache, L. (1997).

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## CHAPTER VI

### Rethinking Identity in a Neo-colonial Situation.

#### 6.1 Introduction

Cultural identity in Réunion has always been a sensitive subject. This question, central to an adequate understanding of Réunionese society has never been the focus of sociological studies as such. Rather, the cultural question has become central to political debate. Since at least 1959, the concept of culture has been a major political issue. On the one hand, the Réunionese Communist Party has used this as a major theme of its ideological discourse in its quest for autonomy. On the other hand, the Gaullist Party (UDR, then RPR, now UMP) sought to stifle indigenous cultural identity in order to impose a French cultural identity. This was implemented through regional discourses and political practices of the plantocratic oligarchy led by Michel Debré. Certain words which were included in the common political vocabulary for over twenty years, such as 'autonomy', 'independence' or 'colony' have become taboo today, due to the integration and the 'narrative repression' of the Debré years.

Slavery and colonialism had already induced a permanent state of repression regarding discourses and practices, imposition of the French language, laws prohibiting cultures of origin and insistence on the Catholic religion: a stranglehold

which is still present in Réunion. The long-distance political management from Paris, which aimed to integrate Réunion into France through the imposition of a legal statute, had profound consequences on economic, social and political levels. This hegemony shaped the island's cultural identity, coinciding with the migratory movements of communities and the simultaneous restructuring of identities which followed. In this context, it is necessary to emphasise that while the population was subjected to an imposed French system, it was not simply passive. Consequently, a sociological study of the formation of identity, which encompasses the introduction of the role of social classes in identity formation, seemed constructive and was considered in Chapters 2 and 3. The structure of Réunionese society is more or less stable and complex; however it does allow communities to interact and to forge social contacts amongst themselves. It is therefore fitting to examine more closely the social organisations and relations of this multi-ethnic society as formed over the centuries. As shown throughout the thesis, on a cultural level, ethnic intermingling has existed since the island was first populated, and will perpetuate itself *ad infinitum*, creating endless transformations of identity.

These creative and culturally dynamic interactions are the basis of cultural and social creolisation as demonstrated at the end of Chapter 2, where the representation of the Other and by the Other as an ongoing and unfinished process was examined. Following the conclusion to of Chapters 4 and 5, this chapter addresses the question of how one is able to negotiate the concept of identity through the transformation of values and social relations in this society. Does the

ever-stronger integration of Réunion into France imposed by the Republican model not risk destroying Réunionese identity? Is the rebirth of a Réunionese culture and identity still possible as shown in my survey?<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter I will examine the consequences of the process of Départementalisation and introduce the concept of a 'heteronomous' identity (in contrast to an autonomous identity) to describe the identity born of these political and economic processes. I will also characterise the Réunionese cultural context based on the hegemony of the French cultural model. It will subsequently become apparent that Départementalisation reinforced the control of knowledge and power by the French institutions, with a concomitant violence of discourse and practices. This will lead us to a re-evaluation of the notion of neo-colonialism in the Réunionese context. I will also show how these French institutions were formed during slavery, colonisation and Départementalisation which gave to racism especially towards the Kaf. In revealing the mechanisms of domination over the Réunionese cultural identity, the aim is to re-appropriate the social and identity transformations, bearing in mind the cultural and ethnic plurality and the conjoined sentiments of allegiance to both Réunion and France, in a non-metropolitan context.

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<sup>1</sup> I reassure the reader: the intention of Chapter 6 is neither to 'break' nor to 'destroy' the Republic, but attempts to critique it scientifically and sociologically in order to improve it with a constructive intent.

## 6.2 Multicultural identity and Republican laws

The identity of Malbar, Chinois or Kaf individuals is influenced by changes in space and time, and also varies according to factors such as class and religion in this multicultural and multiethnic situation. The plurality must be a constant value, stable and fundamental to the structural reality of this society. The intersections and borders are integral to the creolised identity.

Fred Constant notes that 'the consideration of a cultural and identity diversity should not be made at the expense of a sharing of common references'.<sup>2</sup> He would define cultural pluralism as 'a sociological characterisation of a type of society, in which cultural or religious groups co-exist, identified by distinctive lifestyles and unique social requirements'.<sup>3</sup> Cultural pluralism, which in Anglo-Saxon societies includes the establishment of multicultural and community-based laws and politics, seems natural in Réunion, as the population has always recognised the coexistence of different communities. This demonstrates that, as Constant says, 'cultural pluralism is not an end in itself, but the opposite, a better way to organize coexistence'.<sup>4</sup> Social interaction and cohesion strengthen identity in this cultural and non-discriminatory space. Smith analyses this type of situation thus: 'pluralism and its alternatives must be defined institutionally rather than in racial or ethnic terms. Cultural heterogeneity has many forms and bases, while cultural pluralism has only

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<sup>2</sup> Constant, F. (2000). *Le Multiculturalisme*. Paris: Flammarion, p. 88. My translation.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 89. My translation

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 90. My translation

one, namely diversity of the basic institutional system. Plural societies are by no means the only alternatives to homogeneous societies'.<sup>5</sup>

As seen in the survey, in Réunion one may easily be a French national, speak Creole, be Kaf in origin, practise Malbar religion, live an American lifestyle, have had a Western education and eat Asian cuisine.<sup>6</sup> All these social and cultural variables continue to transform and reshape themselves. These interactions, as well as interactions between ethnic groups confront them in the private sphere as well as on an individual level.

In contrast to the situation of Mauritius, which is trapped in ultra-liberalism, and where creolisation is based on individualism and liberalism,<sup>7</sup> Réunionese creolisation is viewed collectively. The rise in social status from which certain Réunionnais ethno-cultural groups have benefited for the past 25 years, has contributed towards a striving for the Mauritian situation.<sup>8</sup> However, I notice that once they attain a certain social class, all the communities re-imagine and claim their identities which have been fragmented both by the powers-that-be as well as identity-related pain.

The cultural issue on the island rests on the fact that cultural diversity is not adaptable to French laws, in turn based on the Jacobin centralism of a Republic, 'single and indivisible'. The cultural multiplicity is not recognised in a legally constituted Republican State. In general, according to Michel Wieviorka, the

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, M.G. (1965). *The Plural Society in the British West Indies*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, p 85

<sup>6</sup> Laplantine has made a similar analysis for Brazil (1997: 79).

<sup>7</sup> See the works of Erikson, T. (1990); (1992).

<sup>8</sup> Medea, 2002: 24-26.

minority claims for identity and public recognition are poorly negotiated by politicians and intellectuals in the French State.

'The adherents to the Republican model, or rather to its caricature [...] have, in effect, successfully and arrogantly used all their talent in order to disqualify all those who wish to appeal for respect and recognition for those who in France one does not wish to call the 'minorities'. Whoever was not content to be an exclusive apostle for the Republic, 'single and indivisible', whoever refused to be completely satisfied with the abstract universalism associated with it; whoever asked for an analysis and examination of requests emanating from these 'minorities', could only be naïve, a rioter or reactionary, paving the way for the country's destruction'.<sup>9</sup>

I would point out that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1789 (in French 'Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme'...<sup>10</sup>) was used subsequently to protect white Western males today (European, American, Australian and South African). In these societies, the white male dominates and excludes (in order of classification) the white female, the non-bourgeois, followed by the black man and black woman. 'Whitening' theories have been entrenched in society and are engineered by elites in order to protect European superiority which débouche on this social class rank made in Chapter 3.81. The analysis of Alain Touraine shows that in a colonial situation:

'adult European men, educated and property-owners, consider it their duty to guide and take charge of the world of women, children, dependent workers and colonised peoples, because they [are] the only sensible people, capable of mastering their passions and rationally seeking the best solutions [...] They [are] well placed to discover a power brutally exercised behind this rationalism [...] The Democracy has become social and no longer simply Republican.'<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Wieviorka, 2001: 8. My translation.

<sup>10</sup> In French, the expression 'homme' denotes 'human' rather than 'male'. I would prefer 'l'humain' to 'l'homme' in this context.

<sup>11</sup> Touraine, A. (2001) 'l'égalité et Différence', in Wieviorka, M. and J. Ohana, eds. *La Différence Culturelle. Une reformulation des débats. Colloque de Carisy*. Paris: Balland. p.87. My translation.



Having defined the cultural context of identity, I now examine the impact of Départementalisation on the formation of identity

### 6.3 The rationale of Départementalisation

The adoption of Département status, the political assimilation of Réunion into metropolitan France in 1946 had very deep economic and social repercussions for the island. The decline of plantations pushed the private sector (led by former colonial plantation owners or even by the last migrants like Zarab, Chinois and Zorey who were not former plantation owners) and the public sector to implement more activities in the tertiary sector. This strengthened the economic dependence on metropolitan France and favoured a genuine hypertrophy of the tertiary sector. The 35.0% unemployment rate <sup>12</sup> shows a serious economic predicament. High production costs combined with excessive social security contributions and the competition of countries with very low salaries, as well as investments in the new holder sector led to the disengagement of farmers. The end of the sugar-cane industry is drawing nearer, with sugar-cane production taking place outside of Réunion. This will also mean the disappearance of a symbol of the history of the Creole culture based on slavery and the plantation society. Nevertheless, the slavery past remains in the collective memory, since the disappearing of material traces does not imply a symbolical disappearance. This is a partial loss of Réunionese identity. Today, the economic crisis of the plantation is flagrant everywhere. Hotels

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<sup>12</sup> See INSEE data regarding unemployment in Réunion from 2001 to 2003 in <http://www.insee.fr/reunion>

are replacing the sugar-cane industry and the economy is now based on tertiary sector business such as tourist accommodation, and services. Départementalisation can be said to have failed with regard to economic development. However it has been successful in terms of the health and social system.

6.31 *A 'new society' model, with cultural integration*

Départementalisation has changed both the way and style of life on this island: including an increase in the birth rate, decline in mortality, rural exodus, mass education, decline in the public/private sector, increase in the service sector (but no development of the manufacturing sector), the emergence of an urban proletariat and its attendant social consequences (unemployment, poverty, depression, alcoholism, violence), the emergence of a new middle class (civil servants and office employees), the promotion of metropolitan products and values, immigration towards the capital, development of social services (unemployment and family allowance and free medical aid) and the birth of charity in late 1970s. The policy of Départementalisation was accentuated by the arrival of Michel Debré in Réunion at the beginning of 1962, where he was elected deputy a few months later, a position he held until 1988.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> I note the resignation of Michel Debré from the post of Prime Minister under De Gaulle on 14 April 1962, following the referendum of 8 April 1962 in France, and the victory of the OUI (Yes) for the independence of Algeria. This leads me to believe that Michel Debré was attached to 'his' colonies. Few months after 'his' defeat he was controversial in the Government and in his original town of Amboise and region of Indre-et-Loire, he was asked by the Réunionnais politicians of UDR to come to Réunion to counter the rise of PCR. He was elected MP of Réunion from 1963 to 1966 and from 1973 and resigned in 1988. See Bouche, D. (1991). *Histoire de la Colonisation Française*. Paris: Fayard.

Through these social effects, Départementalisation has led to a new form of colonialism by modifying the Réunionese social structure. As Jean Houbert shows the 'colonial situation in Réunion is structured along class rather than ethnic lines'.<sup>14</sup> In this case, identity is the result of class formation during colonial history, linked to colonial economy and the formation of values, followed by the formation of social classes during Départementalisation.<sup>15</sup> The notion of identity cannot simply be seen as a question of social class. However, social levels and structures did not change as quickly as was predicted following the political action resulting from post-war modernism. With Départementalisation, the Réunionese population is 'assaulted each day by a little more modernism, it has difficulty in achieving harmony'.<sup>16</sup>

#### 6.4 Départementalisation: decolonisation or extension of colonisation?

Départementalisation is often presented as a form of decolonisation; according to René Squarizoni, Départementalisation is a 'decolonisation achieved through the vote of March 1946 [...] a political and administrative act insistent and built on the past' <sup>17</sup> '[Départementalisation is] a particular form of decolonisation, [which] appears to lead to a complete reformulation of the Réunionnais economy and society, in turn causing a completely original remix of the population'.<sup>18</sup> According to Wilfrid Bertile 'Réunion has embarked upon an unusual path towards

<sup>14</sup> Houbert, J. (1980). 'Réunion: The politics of Départementalisation', *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*. Vol. XVIII, n°3. London: Frank Cass and co, p. 327.

<sup>15</sup> See also my social class rank in Table 3.3, Chapter 3.81.

<sup>16</sup> My translation in [www.clicanoo.com](http://www.clicanoo.com/histoire/histoires): Special Départementalisation: [http:// www.clicanoo.com/histoire/histoires](http://www.clicanoo.com/histoire/histoires)

<sup>17</sup> Squarizoni, R. (1996). *La Réunion, Région*. Université de La Réunion: 1946: La Réunion Département, p.1. My translation.

<sup>18</sup> Squarizoni, R. (1989). *Le peuplement de La Réunion: depuis 1848, dans un processus de décolonisation, une recombinaison féconde à l'œuvre...* St-Denis: Colloque 'Culture Colloque 'Culture et Développement'. CCEB, p. 4. My translation.

decolonisation by integrating itself into its metropolis' <sup>19</sup> at a time when, indeed many years before, English, French and other colonies had almost in their entirety opted for independence. However, Bertile emphasises that '[the former colonies] had not put an end to economic dependence and cultural alienation which are the essence of colonisation itself'. <sup>20</sup>

Implemented in 1946, the Départementalisation of the French overseas administrative Départements appeared far in advance of the first movements towards decolonisation in Africa as shown in the table below. For this reason I feel that in contrast to the preceding ideas, it is difficult to compare Départementalisation to a decolonisation.

**Figure 6.1:** Some dates of independence of former European colonies

Year	Country	Comment
1945		End of Second World War
1946	Réunion	Départementalisation
1947	India	
1949	Libya	
1949	Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos	
1956	Morocco and Tunisia	
1957	Ghana	
1958	Guinea	
1960	Madagascar	
1960	Réunion	'Adapted' Départementalisation as an administrative Département
1962	Algeria	
1962	Jamaica	
1968	Mauritius	
1979	Sainte-Lucia	

<sup>19</sup> Bertile, W. (2001). *La Réunion: Département français d'Outre-Mer, Région européenne Ultrarégionale*. Thèse de Doctorat d'Etat. Université de La Réunion, p. 91. My translation.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 91. My translation

Départementalisation was a type of 'decolonisation' through integration chosen by the Réunionese and left-wing Members of Parliament supporting Aimé Césaire in Parliament both in 1945 and 1946. Jean Houbert analyses this in the same way: 'Réunion is colonial in the very fundamental sense of having been entirely created by the colonial phenomenon [...] colonisation is part and parcel of its whole being written in the structure of its society, its economy, its value system'.<sup>21</sup> But can one really speak of decolonisation, as no pre-colonial indigenous population existed on Réunion, nor was there a national economy or independence? In her investigation, Helen Hintjens suggests a useful analysis of these questions.<sup>22</sup> She feels that the solution which emerged was the Départementalisation of the French overseas administrative Départements. But Hintjens emphasises, in contrast to Bertile and Squarzoni, that the power remaining in place was managed by the Gros Blancs (economic, political, cultural and intellectual) with the complicity of the Zorey, who still fulfil the same role as colonial civil servants and missionaries from Paris.

No 'autochthonic responsibility' has as yet been developed, and still less a local sense of responsibility and in the case of Réunion and others DOM there is no freedom without responsibility.<sup>23</sup> For Hintjens, 'decolonisation is possible without the creation of separate, independent statehood for the former colonies [...] decolonisation is complicated by the unfinished nature of the colonisation process

<sup>21</sup> Houbert, 1980: 342.

<sup>22</sup> See Hintjens, H. (1995). *Alternatives to Independence. Explorations in Post-Colonial Relations*. Dartmouth: Dartmouth Pub Co.

<sup>23</sup> See Hintjens, H. '(2001). What is Freedom? Competing Notions of Rights and Responsibilities in the French Caribbean', *Itinerario*, Vol. XXV, n°2, p. 38

itself'.<sup>24</sup> With Départementalisation 'Guadeloupe, Guyane and Martinique [and Réunion] would be decolonized without becoming independent' according to Fred RENO.<sup>25</sup> With regard to the Départementalisation of the French overseas administrative Départements, General Assembly 915 of the United Nations in New York emphasised on 4 June 1949 that 'it would be no more possible in this case [...] to speak of dependence than it would be in the case of a province in relation to the state of which it formed part'.<sup>26</sup> It was inevitable that decolonisation in Réunion 'was bound to involve more of a radical change in its internal structures than was needed in its external status'.<sup>27</sup>

#### 6.41 Départementalisation and the control of knowledge and power

During Départementalisation public discourses and practices of the dominant class have been used in the Réunionese context in an attempt to construct stable and 'reassuring identities', to use Derrida's terminology, which may coexist.<sup>28</sup> These are used in an attempt to justify the inequalities between individuals and between groups, sometimes with a political aim. Essential questions arise surrounding these methods, relating to the production of knowledge as well as knowledge of subjects in this insular space. With reference to Michel Foucault's notion of the 'archaeology of knowledge', the principal methods constitute the base of the formation of an

<sup>24</sup> Hintjens, 1995: 4-5.

<sup>25</sup> RENO, F. (2001). 'Resourcing Dependency. Decolonisation and Post-colonialism in French Overseas Departments', *Itinerario*, Vol. XXV, n°2, p. 9

<sup>26</sup> Houbert, 1980: 149.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 327

<sup>28</sup> See Derrida, J. (1967). *L'écriture et la Différence*. Paris: Le Seuil. My translation.

'archaeological identity' of subjects. Michel Foucault emphasizes that 'studying the formation of objects [or subjects], the fields in which they emerge and are specified, also studying the conditions for the appropriation of discourse [archaeology of identity] is to encounter the analysis of social formation'.<sup>29</sup> Knowledge can be seen also as the 'common sense'<sup>30</sup> in daily life which permits the people to 'know' and define the truth of 'reality'.

This social formation is achieved through the setting up of institutions in the public sphere framed by the State which manages and dominates, in this case symbolically, by means of violence.<sup>31</sup> By use of this symbolic violence of institutions,<sup>32</sup> the State places itself in violation of its own democracy and a respect for the fundamental laws of human rights, where all 'men are born free and equal in the eyes of the law', enacted since the French Revolution. The State created an identity in the public sphere which is completely different to that which exists in the private sphere. Through the intercession of its institutions and representatives, the State attempts to introduce this public identity into the private sphere in order to achieve a better *metropolisation*. If I refer to the sociology of Bourdieu, economics and the production and the use of cultural assets find their expression in symbolic violence.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Foucault, M. (1969). *Archéologie du Savoir*. Paris: Gallimard, p. 270. My translation

<sup>30</sup> See Bourdieu, P. (1989) *La Noblesse d'Etat. Grandes Ecoles et Esprit de Corps*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit. My translation.

<sup>31</sup> See results of my survey from table 4.14 and 4.15 in Chapter 4.

<sup>32</sup> See Bourdieu, P. (1994). *Raisons Pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action*. Paris: Le Seuil.

<sup>33</sup> See also results of my survey in Table 4.14 and 4.15 in Chapter 4.

In almost every historic colonial situation, one encounters an instance of resistance. But in the case of the Réunionnais, do they attempt to revolt? It would seem that economic, political and cultural mechanisms are in place to counter any eventual resistance or revolt. We see a form of resistance through the birth of a cultural nationalism led by the cultural activist associations seen in the introduction to this chapter. For instance, as shown in my survey, 64.6% of those interviewed want a regional flag.<sup>34</sup> Despite a passion for the independent and autonomous parties of the 1960s and 1970s in Réunion, encouraged by global decolonisation, the Départementalistes, led by Michel Debré, did not succumb to the pressure of decolonisation. This continued until the conclusive rallying of the Réunion Communist Party in France in 1981 following the victory of François Mitterand in the presidential elections and of his politics of regionalisation and decentralisation.<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, today the cultural activist associations have formed a political space for a type of resistance or nationalism which will be realised through cultural and artistic expression. The latter contribute to what could be considered a Réunionese national identity. However, dualism and cultural antagonism exist within the Réunionese social space. Bearing in mind the analysis of Frantz Fanon in Algeria, if no national culture exists in a country, this signifies the existence of a colonial situation and domination.

<sup>34</sup> See table 5.3 in Chapter 5.

<sup>35</sup> I note that no independent political party exists in Réunion, except for *Parnoumim* over the past 4 years, which at the outset was a pro-independence political party (1998), then an autonomist political party (2000), then a regional political party (2002) and now a *Federalist Party of Reunion* (2003, *Parti Fédéraliste Réunionnais*) associated with the Federalist Party of France. A political party run by civil servants (government officials) of the French National Education, like all the leaders and members of independent political parties since 1960. A new independence party, *Nasyon Réyoné*, has been created for the regional election in March 2004 and gets only 0.70%.



'Colonial domination [...] soon managed to dismember in a spectacular fashion the cultural existence of a submissive people [...] Every effort was made to lead the colonised to confess to the inferiority of their culture transformed by instinctive behaviour, to recognise the impossibility of rehabilitating their nation, and, in the extreme, the disorganised and unfinished character of their own biological structure'.<sup>36</sup>

However, in Réunion nationalism is solely limited to resistance and cultural assertion centred around language, music (notably maloya) or gastronomy. This form of nationalism has no strong political, ethnic or economic dimension and weight, and still less a social one. Nationalism in certain countries such as Ireland, Palestine or the Slavic countries is based on religious conflict,<sup>37</sup> whilst in Réunion nationalism is based on the Creole language and therefore on Creole culture as revealed by my survey. That is, nationalism revolves around identity, an indicator, as explained above, of a social stratification. Societal structures and practices in the colonies were encoded as differences in development.<sup>38</sup> Psychiatrists such as Frantz Fanon and Anna Heinz demonstrated clearly how colonial practices affected psychiatric theories and mental illnesses. Alcoholism, forms of sexual violence, physical violence and even murder are examples of the scourges linked to colonialism and especially to neo-colonialism.

The contemporary identity was instituted in Réunion with the advent of Départementalisation. It became heteronomous and hybrid, despite attempts by the upper class to seek out the origins of its identity and its cultural ancestry.

<sup>36</sup> Fanon, F. (1962). *Les Damnés de la Terre*. Paris: Maspero, p. 284. My translation

<sup>37</sup> See Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell and Encksen, T. (2002). *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthropological perspectives*. London: Pluto Press, 2nd ed.

<sup>38</sup> See Heinz, A. (1998). 'Colonial Perspectives in the Construction of the Psychotic Patient as Primitive Man', *Critique of Anthropology*. London: Sage Publications.

Réunionese identity is not stable; it is in flux, always in the process of creolisation, and is becoming liberal in accordance with 'global identities'.<sup>39</sup> Smith theorises that 'the ideal forms of institutional life [...] are of European derivation; in consequence, differing metropolitan affiliations produce differing versions of Creole culture. But in their Creole contexts, these institutional forms diverge from their metropolitan models to a greater or lesser degree to fit local conditions'.<sup>40</sup>

#### 6.42 *The exclusion of Creole language from the public sphere*

Evolution and progress have created a necessity for control over populations in an attempt to blur the dialectic of 'master and slave'. Studies of the formation and social levels in Réunion reveal a completely new phenomenon: those in power in Réunion establish their hegemony, not on the possession of land and spaces to be cultivated or used for commerce, but on the control of consciousness, of knowledge, of cultures and external identities, in order to dispossess individuals of the ability to think or reflect.<sup>41</sup> The possessors of power are representatives of the State, the Zorey, the Gros Blanc and the local bourgeoisie. The role of language is very important in this control of consciousness. Over the course of time, the possession of power has been conditioned by a mastery of the French language which permits the construction of hegemony in a Réunionese social and community

<sup>39</sup> See Appadurai, A. (1990). 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural economy', *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 7, 295-310.

See also Sassen, S. (1998). *Globalization and Its Discontents*, New York: The New Press.

<sup>40</sup> Smith, 1965: 5.

<sup>41</sup> See my social class rank in table 3.3 in Chapter 3.81.

organisation, where the Creole language has been relegated to the private sphere. This explains why today Réunionnais individuals do not use the Creole language in the public sphere according to Table 4.22 in Chapter 4, but only in the private sphere. For example, journalists for local daily newspapers translate comments made in Creole language by interviewees into French.<sup>42</sup> No promotion of the Creole language exists in the public sphere, quite the contrary it is being gagged in the media.<sup>43</sup>

In order to fight the hegemony of the French language, certain cultural associations and militant activists are working towards an official codification of the Creole language with a view to establishing a written version of Creole, and in so doing, investing the language with a dimension which will allow it to occupy a more important place in the public sphere.

However, this approach is complicated by the fact that the use of the French language by Réunionnais appears to be an attempt to forge an identity which will be recognised in society. The Creole language and Creole culture are in the minority, excluded from any participation in the construction of the individual in the City.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> This phenomenon may best be explained by the non-mastery and lack of interest in the Réunionnais Creole language shown by journalists who are mostly Zorey, and at worst, through a desire to banish the Creole language from the public sphere, which contributes to its discreditation.

<sup>43</sup> I note the excellent initiative of a televised journal in Creole on Télé Réunion on Saturday lunch time, the effort made by Radio Réunion with its presenters speaking Creole (even if the star presenter used to belong to an association against the teaching of Creole in school: *SRI/CJC*) and programs in Creole speaking to listeners in the language of their choice. This has been in place since the management of the station was taken over by non-whites. Its rival, Radio Free Dom opens the airwaves to Réunionnais from morning to evening on the broadcast 'Radio complaints' ('Radio Doléance'), a type of radio talk show which allows listeners who wish to express themselves in Creole language the opportunity to do so, (now with a political interest), since its inception in 1984. Antenne Réunion, rival of the public television station, tolerated the Creole language before RFO, thus looking to attract a working class audience, managed with local transmissions which were those of Télé Free Dom before the seizure of broadcasters in 1991, trigger for the 'Chaudron incidents' and riots (Médée, 2002 and 2004).

<sup>44</sup> 'Cité' in French.

In this arena the individual's justification no longer has social significance. Participation in the City is conditioned by a mastery of the French language. In Réunion those fluent in Creole are mostly to be found in the lower classes, the 'bilinguals' belong to the middle class and those who are French-speaking belong to the upper classes. This seems to confirm the results of my survey with the cross-tabulation between monthly income and language.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, the practice of the hegemonic language structures Réunionese society into social classes. In *Orientalism* Edward Said states that

'culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but by what Gramsci calls consent. In any society which is not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as hegemony'.<sup>46</sup>

#### 6.5 The influence of hegemony on identity

Antonio Gramsci often uses the notions of *direzione* 'direction' and *egemonia* 'hegemony' which may be interchangeable. In Réunion a French hegemonic identity exists in the public sphere. It is the power of the representation of Self which gives strength to the group. Antonio Gramsci asserts that

'a class is dominant in two ways, that is to say it is dominant and ruling. It rules the allied classes and dominates the opposing classes which are the enemies. Therefore, even before attaining power a class can (and must) 'lead': when it is in power it becomes dominant, but continues to 'lead' as well ... there can and must be a 'political hegemony' even before the attainment of governmental powers, and one should not count solely on the power and material force which such a position gives in order to exercise political leadership or hegemony'.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> See results of my survey in Table 4.26.

<sup>46</sup> Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, p. 7

<sup>47</sup> Gramsci 1971: 57-58.

According to Gramsci's model, these two aspects of domination in society appear in the form of a dominant ideology, that is, that of the Republic represented by the Zorey and the Gros Blanc in Réunion, as well as the local bourgeoisie. The practices which illustrate this double hegemony (ruling and dominating) are sanction, favouritism and co-option. In this way, the dominant group exercises 'leadership' before obtaining political and neo-colonial power. The singularity of the Réunionese situation is that the dominant group is itself dependent on the French State, as a result of the colonial system. Cultural practices are therefore a space of struggle for hegemony. The hegemony described in our case study, where domination is constructed through consensus, is based on the links and interweaving of social relations which allow for those processes of favouritism and co-option mentioned above, which have existed since the island was first populated. If I am to believe the historians from Réunion, at the outset there was no slavery and an almost egalitarian situation existed in which the first arrivals were not enslaved. Twelve Malgaches arrived with the first three French adventurers to the island in 1663. Moving forward to the present situation, we note that it was with a view to instituting social equality with France that Départementalisation was put in place. This Eurocentric project aimed to make Réunion a French Département in the same capacity as the others.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See Médéa, L. (2002). '1996-1998: Celebrating 50 years of Départementalisation and 150 years of the Abolition of Slavery', in Colin Leys, ed. *African Contemporary Records*, Vol. 26, New York: Africana Publishing, B495-B501.

A parallel can be established between these two periods in the history of Réunion. From the egalitarian situation onwards, I note that in both cases evolution led to a rise in value of the White who became untouchable and used as a point of reference. The mastery of power and knowledge was a major element in the formation of the identities of neo-colonial subjects, as well as in the social formation of a hegemonic class in this Indian Ocean society controlled by the State. The State authorised violence through slavery, colonisation and the domination of man by man. Liberty was undermined and violence legitimised. Later, as we have seen in Table 4.14, the State would institute symbolic violence through its institutions during Départementalisation. In Réunion, structural and institutional symbolic violence favour the rich to the detriment of the poor, and the 'Whites' to the detriment of the 'Blacks'. By adapting Foucault's theories <sup>49</sup> to Réunionese society, we can say that transformational methods have transformed the subjugated slave into a Départementalised subject.

The collective representations of the Réunionnais subject flow directly from the structure of the society. From these representations developed the setting up of Réunionnais subjects, together with the transformation of the enslaved subjects into French citizens in 1946, a social construct created by the formation of the capitalist sugar-cane production economy. Following on from this structure, the awareness and reaction of the Réunionese public are their only means of fighting against alienation.

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<sup>49</sup> See Foucault, M. (1966) and (1969).

Foucault would have warned against this parcelling out of identity which juxtaposes elements with no regard for harmonization. Theoretical methods no longer count, but social facts and realities, which result in the weakening of the individual. In this instance, the thinking, constituent subject has no chance of emerging from the crowd. When social and cultural differences multiply, alienation spreads into the social space. There is a lack of any reference to a tradition or an object. Michel Foucault's theories are easily adapted to this case study. He introduced the notion of 'insecurity of knowledge'<sup>50</sup> due solely to its inconsistency which reduces man to the state of an object. He explains that 'measuring the mutations which generally take place in the historical domain, calls into question the limits, the themes peculiar to the history of ideas'.<sup>51</sup> It is not one in the full sense of the term, as it remains within the framework of what I call 'heteronomous identity' that I will try to examine the concept in the next section.

#### 6.6 Defining a heteronomous identity

At the end of this analysis, I note that a social dependence on 'colonial power' is based on both material and sentimental factors. This confirms that Départementalisation is not a form of decolonisation but rather a reinforcement or continuation of colonisation. In this context, I suggest the notion of a heteronomous identity in order to qualify the current Réunionese cultural identity.

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<sup>50</sup> See Foucault, M. (1969). My translation.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 25. My translation

According to Jacqueline Russ's dictionary of philosophy, heteronomy is the 'condition of a person receiving from a law exterior to the one to which she submits or obeys'.<sup>52</sup>

If we transpose this definition into sociological terms, a heteronomous identity may be defined as a 'governed identity', which is neither an autonomous nor an independent identity. The characteristics of this heteronomous identity are imitation or mimicry of the governing and dominant identity, and parallel to this the presence of racism towards certain categories of the population dependent on a psychological mechanism of identification with the aggressor. I therefore conclude that a Réunionese cultural identity exists as such, but is not independent in its 'social and national identity'. This is signalled by reliance on charity and an important emotional dimension in the relationship Réunionnais have with France. The political and symbolic identity is completely dependent and heteronomous. Réunion has become a 'controlled society'<sup>53</sup> with a new, post-modern form of societal domination, through dependence and heteronomy. Individuals are the result of 'the union and [of] the tension of a society which institutes and a society which is instituted',<sup>54</sup> managed and governed by heteronomy.

Castoriadis views the birth of heteronomy as exterior to the social milieu with its establishment effected through institutions such as the government, religion, the family and blood relationships, the law, ownership, education, economy and

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<sup>52</sup> Russ, J. (1991). *Dictionnaire de Philosophie*. Paris: Bordas, p. 123. My translation

<sup>53</sup> See Deleuze, G. (1990). *Pourparlers*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

<sup>54</sup> Castoriadis, C. (1975). *L'Institution imaginaire de la Société*. Paris: Le Seuil, p. 24. My translation.



language. Institutions are then seized as pre-existing structures and organisations where individual or group behaviours and interactions are encountered. Equally, heteronomy covers 'denial' and concealment of individuals' identity construction in the dimensions of space and time. It is a question of perception, education and imagination involving the dependence and exploitation of individuals as a direct impregnation of society in its institutions. I deduce that the most important element of heteronomy is the relationship that society maintains with its institutions in space and time and not the shape and constitution of those institutions.

However, it is especially the control over society by institutions together with their maintenance which are, in our case, the elements of heteronomy and alienation of identity. According to Castoriadis, alienation is 'the autonomisation and dominance of the imaginary moment in the institution which leads to an autonomisation and dominance of the institution relative to society'.<sup>55</sup> This alienation brought with it a racism beginning with the colonial system. Institutions therefore form the social structures that set up the behaviour patterns in a society. People's actions, behaviours and practices are then socially controlled by these institutions.

#### 6.7 Is heteronomous identity a neo-colonial identity?

The notion of post-colonialism, which refers to the period beginning with the end of colonisation, demands investigation in the Réunionese context, insofar as

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 1975: 123. My translation.

Réunion had not known independence prior to becoming a colony. Observing colonialism is a delicate issue, and defining it in relation to Réunion is a difficult exercise. If colonialism may be defined as the domination of a people by an external power, this does not apply to Réunion, as it was not inhabited. On this virgin island, the dominant population of origin, that is the French (Gros Blanc and Petit Blanc), who had become slave- and land-owners, are as autochthonous as the other ethnic groups descended from slaves and indentured labourers. On the plantations, these Europeans exercised their power within the framework of a system of exploitation and economic production: slavery and indentureship under the control of France and its lieutenants. Colonialism in Réunion may be defined as the domination of several external peoples by an external population in a virgin space and territory.

The concept of post-colonialism is different from, but bears similarities to, neo-colonialism. The term neo-colonialism refers to the period in which the European powers withdrew from the direct administration of their former colonies in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The independent states which emerged from this process are described as 'Third World' as well as countries in the process of development or 'post-colonial' states. Nevertheless, in several cases, including that of Réunion, independence was not offered; it was neither viable, nor desired by the majority of the population where colonialism was reinforced. I therefore describe the situation of Réunion as a neo-colonial situation. Réunion is a developed country, which is an extremely rare and privileged situation coming from a colonialist background. In Réunion, the neo-colonial world is both a privileged and

non-privileged one, with the notion of identity affirmed or denied by 'social Darwinism' in the space of culture, politics, economics and the family.

The concept of post-colonialism has often been used in modern and post-modern critical and comparative literature. Post-colonialism and neo-colonialism are the reproduction of power, not by an external people, but by the ex-colonising country over the former colonised countries: political, economic and cultural power. Neo-colonialism is also 'a specific reference to the type of post-colonial state which arose in Asia and Africa after the post-war decolonisation'.<sup>56</sup>

It has also been referred to as an 'inheritance of imperialism'.<sup>57</sup> The terms 'post-colonial' and 'neo-colonial' are quite simply: 'a polite way of saying non-Whites, non-Europeans or perhaps non-Europeans-but-inside-Europe'.<sup>58</sup> Neo-colonialism holds true when global economic politics are destabilised in favour of former colonising countries. However it also provokes cultural repercussions as a consequence of the officialisation and nationalisation of the language of the former coloniser in the former colonised countries or the non-metropolitan regions, and a concomitant disappearance of the autochthones and indigenous language. These repercussions also appear in the field of ideas and knowledge, lifestyles, social interactions, politics and economics.

Cristal Bartolovich shows us that:

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<sup>56</sup> Ahmad, A. (1995). 'The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality', *Race and Class*, n° 36, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> See Spivak, G. C. (1990) 'Poststructuralism: Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value', in Collier, P. H. Geyer-Ryan, (eds.) *Literary Theory Today*. Cornell: University Press.

<sup>58</sup> Ahmad, 1995: 9.

'These global imbalances manifest themselves in several ways in the relationships between metropolitans and non-metropolitans in intellectual life, through a network of mediations which are complicated by an obscure form of economic politics, but which are not completely illegible. [...] The institutionalisation of *disproportion* in the production of knowledge, which decrees that while non-metropolitan intellectuals must demonstrate a familiarity with Euro-American learning in order to gain credibility (and not only in the eyes of their metropolitan peers), the opposite does not apply'<sup>59</sup>.

Is Réunion a post-colony? No. But can one speak of a neo-colonial identity in Réunion? Yes. Yes, because one may make reference to the Creole language and culture of these diverse ethnic groups and because Réunion is not yet independent. But political efforts will still take a long time to develop the language and culture defined as Creole. The neo-colonial social and cultural identity of the Réunionnais is more anchored in Westernisation, held and controlled by the ruling class. In speaking of British identities, Robin Cohen explains this phenomenon: 'the diasporic border identity, particularly that element which is powerfully impregnated by class pretensions, loses its means of support without the intimate connections between the metropole on the one hand, and the empire and its dominions on the other'.<sup>(6)</sup>

Political discourse in Réunion has been represented in the visual arts and oral performances, notably theatrical and musical, as well as poetry and literature. I also categorise sport as an art form, following C.L.R. James, in the same category as other art forms quoted. Sport is a popular art form, an art adopted and best

<sup>59</sup> Bartolovich, C. (2002). 'Introduction', in Bartolovich, C. and N. Lazarus, eds. (2002). *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 12–13.

<sup>60</sup> Cohen, R. (1995). 'Fuzzy frontiers of identity: the British case', *Social Identities* 1 (1), p. 48.

mastered by the lower and underprivileged classes. In the case of Réunion, among other countries, players from these classes supply the French national football and handball teams with champion players. Among these 400 athletes are 95% Kaf, 3% Métis and 2% Malbar, Zorey, Chinois and Petit Blanc.<sup>61</sup>

In Réunion, neo-colonial theories will be difficult to develop due to the oral Creole tradition and the lack of a written form of the Creole language. Political barriers will be placed in the face of the development of such specific and regional theories. The neo-colonial identity of different categories of the population is a legacy of the period of slavery and colonisation, translated in the present day into social injustice. For this reason, the Gros Blanc have always maintained very strong relations with the 'Mother Country', notably in family and other relationships, but also in all the sectors mentioned. As I have explained, the Gros Blanc never severed ties with the metropolitan culture, and maintained privileged relations with metropolitans and their politics. Neo-colonialism is therefore indicated by the manner of integration of the subjects into France. This is a triumph for France, who thus keeps control of its 'confetti'.<sup>62</sup>

Françoise Vergès<sup>63</sup> gave an excellent analysis of the political and cultural history of the island's relations with France the complex relationship between the Zorey

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<sup>61</sup> I obtained these figures from the Centre Régional Olympique et Sportif (CROS) in Réunion. I referred to the High International Level Board Commission for names and pictures of these champions.

<sup>62</sup> Guillebaud, J.-C. (1976). *Les Confettis de l'Empire*: Djibouti, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Réunion, Tahiti, Nouvelle Calédonie, Guyane, Polynésie Française, Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises, Mayotte, Archipel des Comores, Nouvelles Hébrides, Territoires Français des Afars et des Issas, Wallis et Futuna. Paris: Le Seuil.

<sup>63</sup> Vergès, F. (1999). *Monsters and Revolutionaries: Colonial Family Romance and Mètissage*. Duke: Duke University Press.

and Réunionnais through novels, iconography and texts from various disciplines.<sup>64</sup> Vergès explained that today this relationship between France and Réunion is a family romance: France is the seemingly protective mother, while the people of Réunion are seen and see themselves as France's children and dependent from 'la Mere Patrie'. I consider this a neo-colonial relationship.

A similar analysis is given by Richard Burton<sup>65</sup> of the political link between France and Réunion resembling a family relationship between mother, France, and the child, Réunion. There is a Freudian dimension. For him 'the regionalizing measures of the 1980s allowed the assimilated French West Indian [and Réunionnais] "child" to enjoy both continued protection and sustenance from the assimilating metropolitan "parent" and at least a minimum of self-identity as a quasi-autonomous adult'.<sup>66</sup> Départementalisation resulted in a colonial relationship with a family dimension hiding the hegemony that resulted from slavery and colonisation as well as making the equality between France and all DOM. This reinforces neo-colonialism.

As Arif Dirlik also notes, Ahmad observes that post-colonialism, to which may be added neo-colonialism, is a 'question of class'.<sup>67</sup> Beyond the question of class, Dirlik introduces the important factor of the geographical organisation 're-

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<sup>64</sup> Including law, medicine and psychology.

<sup>65</sup> See the work of Burton, R. (1994). *La Famille Coloniale: La Martinique et la Mère Patrie 1789-1992*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

<sup>66</sup> Burton, R. (1993) "Maman-France Doudou": Family Images in French West Indian Colonial Discourse', *Diascritics*, 23-3, p. 89.

<sup>67</sup> Ahmad, A. (1992). *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, p 211

established, relocated to the centre of the capital, in new zones of contact'.<sup>68</sup> The colonial identity was based equally on the control of societies and that of space. This new urban zone, one of meetings and junctions, replaces the port culture of the past. The urban culture takes priority over port culture, where the individuals' *métis* and neo-colonial identities are reversed. 'These zones of contact shar[e] in the powers of the centre, in which culture serves as a means of evading questions of inequality and of oppression in inter-class relations, but which remains a useful means of defining identity in the relations of inter-class negotiations for power'.<sup>69</sup>

Neo-colonial identity is under the maintenance and control of these same societies. Control of space began with navigators' accounts which nourish the collective imagination and encourage the exploration and exploitation of virgin territories. Today, the control of space is still very important (in international geopolitics) through the post-colonies and neo-colonies in term of control of public sphere. If colonialism was the 'discovery', neo-colonialism and post-colonialism are rather the 'separation' or 'segregation' in order to control international and public sphere in these neo-colonies, while simultaneously trying to stabilise developed capitalist societies. In Réunion, a division exists between the social identities of different classes, between the level which rich and poor occupy in the social stratification, as well as that which is occupied by different ethnic groups; wholly controlled by the State and its institutions. In analysing the political economics and

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<sup>68</sup> Dirlik, A. (1999). 'Is there History after Eurocentrism? Globalism, PostColonialism and the Disavowal of History. In *Cultural Critique*, n°42, p. 24

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 24

the States, Ajaz Ahmad dates the appearance of post-colonialism, like neo-colonialism, at the beginning of the 1970s.

Subsequently, by the end of the 1970s, Edward Said no longer studied post-colonialism through economic relations but through the study of 'discourses', notably in *Orientalism*.<sup>70</sup> Said established an ethical, epistemological and ontological, indeed metaphysical distinction between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident'; a distinction based especially on relations existing between the cultures of the two blocs. He termed this 'Orientalism' confirms the separation between a Western cultural identity and the rest of the world. With his notion of Orientalism, Said wished to confront Westernisation and demonstrate that Westerners established their power by managing Easterners through the dual mechanism of administration and institution.<sup>71</sup>

The Réunionese culture was powerless to resist this imperialism. For that matter, a resistance movement had never existed. The 'fetish of the West'<sup>72</sup> is defined as being in a position of power, in a dominant position in relation to pleasure, to fear and to racism, whether it be in the metropole or in the colonies, it is the will to be master. This Western fetishism is projected by the Réunionese subjects onto their Indian Ocean neighbours, as well as onto Africans, Indians, Arabs and Asians, as explained above. The Réunionese reproduce a Western identity, indeed a French identity. Stuart Hall considers 'identity [as] similar to a

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<sup>70</sup> See Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.

<sup>71</sup> See also the work of Young, R. (1995). *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge.

<sup>72</sup> See Lazarus, N. (2002).



'production' which is never complete, always in evolution and always constituted within, and not external to representation'.<sup>73</sup> For Hall, cultural identity in a diasporic context is defined by 'a shared culture, a sort of attachment to a collective self [...]. Cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as a 'people' with stable frames of reference and meaning, unchanging and continuous, under the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our current history'.<sup>74</sup>

This concept of cultural identity may be adapted to the Réunionese context in order to define neo-colonial identity. Having lived under a dominant French culture, the Réunionese would not rediscover an identity, but would come to know a colonised identity. Here, neo-colonial discourse is based on the mechanical formation of knowledge, and especially on the creation of fantasy and desires in a non-European context, based on the European model. The choice of modifying certain place names in order to anchor them in a European context contributes to this formation of fantasy and desire. I note the appearance of the word 'Métropole' to replace that of 'France' in the 1960s, or again the re-naming of a place where the first inhabitants settled, from 'cave of the first exiles' to 'cave of the first French' in 1965 to commemorate the tricentenary of the populating of the island. Françoise Vergès explains that choosing 1665 to mark the colonisation of the island following the Company of India taking possession of it, is placing the 'accent on the French

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<sup>73</sup> Hall, S. (1990). 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in Rutherford, J. ed. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, p. 110

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110

origin'.<sup>75</sup> Choosing the date of 1663 would have been to recognise the importance of the Malgache people who inhabited the island, who escaped the first subjection, servitude and slavery, and would also have been a recognition of the primary plurality of the island by placing the accent on the Malgache origin,<sup>76</sup> as well as the black African cultures and identities of Réunionese society.

Teaching at the university or at IUFM<sup>77</sup> (as well as in secondary school) is monopolised by metropolitan representatives in an education system which is hierarchical and colonial.<sup>78</sup> Those students who succeed in the national examination are obliged to go to France for further training, or to work in France. Richard Burton analyzed a similar case in the French West Indies noting that they 'are particularly incensed by the large recruitment of metropolitan teachers when many qualified Martinicans are obliged to seek posts in France'.<sup>79</sup> Because of this, White French people are always the best placed and most favoured. Power is not given to the natives, but remains in the hands of the 'eternal' dominators and the like. This entire structure and superstructure fall under the title of neo-coloniality, which could be defined by Gayatri Spivak when she describes of post-coloniality as a 'mode of existence whose importance and fragility could be destroyed by techniques of specialist knowledge when they are combined with strategies of

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<sup>75</sup> Vergès, F. (2001). 'Peuple Créole, Identités Ethniques à l'île de La Réunion', in Wiewiorka, M. *La Différence Culturelle. Une reformulation des débats*. Colloque de Cerisy. Paris: Balland, p. 224. My translation.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 224. My translation.

<sup>77</sup> IUFM: Institut des Formations des Maîtres is the Teachers Training College in France and Réunion.

<sup>78</sup> Michael Crochet, cultural militant as well as Education Principal Adviser of the college 'Plateau Goyave' called the system instituted by the Rectorat (Local Education Authority) of Réunion 'Rectocracy'.

<sup>79</sup> Burton, R. (1982). 'Nationalist Ideologies in Contemporary Martinique', University of London, Seminar Papers, Institution of Commonwealth Studies, n° 29, p. 81.

power [...] Post-[neo-]coloniality may speak for a strategy which continually destroys the apparent opposition'.<sup>80</sup> This neo-colonial identity space is a 'deconstructive case', as Derrida terms it,<sup>81</sup> where the social hierarchy is not worthy of a democracy, since the notions of citizenship and human rights are not respected, and since social, cultural and ethnic equality are not reflected in either authorities or identities. Alain Touraine believes that 'there are no social relations of equality, and when relations without inequalities exist [...] society regards them as dangerous'.<sup>82</sup>

Neo-colonial identity is forming itself around the imagination and fantasy with the illusion of the native land as utopia. The European presence, manifest through administration, education, tourism, institutions, the European Union flag, the relation with the metropolis, its tourists, and the fact that political decisions are made by officials in Paris rather than by the elected locals; in brief, the political, economic, psychological or even cultural dependence of Réunion allows us to conclude that a neo-colonial identity exists on the island, modelled on and imposed by the European and local elite ruling class. Here the social identity formation of people occurs in the framework of the power interactions of domination. By taking the case of the French West Indies Richard Burton views the resulting relationship between the French state and local elites and petty Bourgeois as profoundly alienating. 'Herein [...] lies the greatest and most insidious triumph of French neo-

<sup>80</sup> Spivak, 1990: 215-217.

<sup>81</sup> See Derrida, J. (1967). My translation.

<sup>82</sup> Touraine, A. (2001). 'Égalité et Différence', in Wicvorka, M. et J. Ohana, eds. (2001). *La Différence Culturelle. Une reformulation des débats. Colloque de Carrey*. Paris: Balland, p. 86. My translation.

colonialism in the Antilles: that it can induce a feeling of dependence and reluctant gratitude [...] in those whose lives it dominates, distorts and depersonalizes'.<sup>83</sup> Added to that Fred Reno asserts that 'a large fraction of the local elites have adopted them to convey their demand for integration into the French institutions, either through assimilation or through regionalisation'.<sup>84</sup>

This dominance is institutionalised by the Réunionese elites by French language in public discourse and public ceremonies, such as Bastille Day (the French national holiday, celebrated on 14 July). Furthermore there are new ceremonies which started two years ago such as a ceremony celebrated by the Préfecture of Réunion for the winning over of Réunion to France Libre during the Second World War and the fact that Réunion was 'saved' by the war boat Leopard 'against' the Vichy regime on 27 November 1942. This event commemorated on 27 November annually will become part of the collective and public memory. During these ceremonies, euphemisms are used to mask domination of French culture upon the Creole culture (therefore the Kaf culture). It is important for the construction of the Kaf identity to enforce symbolical public ceremonies related to the history of Kaf people to be recognised in the public sphere.

Based on my social class rank of Chapter 3, Réunionnais form part of the societal structure with fixed roles that have been in place since the slavery period. Therefore the social identity of people and social class stratification are justified and

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<sup>83</sup> Burton, R. (1982). 'Nationalist Ideologies in Contemporary Martinique', University of London Seminar Papers, Institution of Commonwealth Studies, n° 29.

<sup>84</sup> Reno, F. (2001). 'Resourcing Dependency. Decolonisation and Post-colonialism in French Overseas Departments', *l'Annuaire*, Vol. XXV, n°2, p. 21.

legitimized by the symbolic space. This legitimation by the institutions continues to place the Kaf at the bottom of the social class stratification. Consequently on the one hand several Kaf do not want to be dominated and reject Kaf values and ethnicity. Several black people prefer to define themselves as Métis rather than Kaf. On the other hand this denigration of Kaf identity can be seen at work in the institutions. These institutions were formed during slavery and colonialism and gave rise to racism.

#### 6.8 Racism: sequel to slavery and capitalism

Anchored in the post-Départementalisation which perpetuates the reign of market capitalism, the MP and mayor of Tampon town, André Thien-Ah-Koon, also known as TAK,<sup>85</sup> wished to rename the village 'Plaine des Cafres'<sup>86</sup> to 'Plaine des Volcans'<sup>87</sup> on 28 March 2003. He believed this new name was more 'marketable'. According to TAK, this name includes more 'elements of tourist appeal' to attract outsiders. In addition, TAK felt that the villagers refuted this identity and that 'the population and children of the Plaine des Cafres would recognise themselves more easily as *Volcanais* than as *Cafriplainois*, a name which they have never adopted [...] in this little corner of France'.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> TAK is a Chinois of Réunion, he is the only Chinese phenotype MP in French parliament.

<sup>86</sup> 'Plain of Kaf' or 'Plain of slaves' descendants.

<sup>87</sup> 'Plain of Volcanoes'.

<sup>88</sup> My translation. See the article and its humiliating comments in <http://www.clicanou.com/articles/article.asp?id of the 29> March 2003.

Disregarding Réunionese history, TAK was prepared to efface all traces of a life of slavery on his commune; all of the African and Malagasy memory in this 'little corner of France'.<sup>89</sup> He was also prepared to renounce history and deny the heritage of all the Kaf and blacks on the island.<sup>90</sup> A supporter of ultra-liberal globalisation, the deputy mayor of Tampon is the owner of several large businesses and therefore circumscribed the project within the logic of international market growth and tourism on his commune. If the flood of readers' letters in newspapers is to be believed, coupled with the actions of Kaf cultural activist associations to counter the Tampon municipal team, this idea has awakened a powerful identity consciousness that was dormant in the masses until this point. TAK's proposal reflects the racism based on colonial discourses and approaches hammered out for centuries, which re-emerge in this type of project in the service of European capitalism. TAK and his municipal team are victims of what could be called fragmented modern colonial discourses. Victims, like the other Réunionnais, of Eurocentric racism where thought, reason, identity(ies) and social role(s) of individuals are 'heteronomous', imitating both the neo-coloniser and a 'hegemonous' ideology.<sup>91</sup> This example of racism is explained in the work of Michel

<sup>89</sup> 'Ce petit coin de France' according to André Thuen-Ah-Koon. See in <http://www.clicanoo.com/articles/article.asp?id>

<sup>90</sup> 'The deputy mayor of Tampon finally abandoned his project or rather decided to 'postpone' the renaming of the Plaine des Cafres on 20 April 2003. see <http://www.clicanoo.com/articles/article.asp?id=50909>

<sup>91</sup> See Média (2004). 'Hégémonie et Hétéronomie: les conséquences du processus d'occidentalisation à travers la Départementalisation. Repenser l'identité dans une Situation Pluriculturelle' in Labache, L., Média, L. et F. Vergès, eds. *Identité et Société Réunionnaise. Nouvelles Perspectives, Nouvelles Approches*. Paris: Karthala (Forthcoming).

Wieviorka, where he demonstrated that racism is based on a 'racism of inequality' or 'of exploitation', and on 'cultural difference and exclusion'.<sup>92</sup>

The body of analytical studies on racism in Réunion show that, similar to the case cited above, racism is caused by the repercussions of slavery and colonialism. Eric Williams analysed judiciously that 'slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery'.<sup>93</sup> For him, 'slavery in no way implied, in any scientific sense, the inferiority of the Negro'.<sup>94</sup> Helen Scott gives a materialist explanation for racism and explains that the origin of 'negro' racism is the culmination of structures of 'modern ideologies aris[ing] simultaneously with the first economic signs of capitalism: agricultural and mercantile capitalist exchange'.<sup>95</sup>

In the case of Réunion, the 'first economic signs of capitalism' appeared with the production system called plantation economy, which saw the emergence of 'Negro' slavery. One cannot deny that from slavery to the present day, the economy has been dominated by sugar cane production. This economy corresponded to a bipolar society ruled by a white oligarchy of powerful proprietors and traders, while the mass of the population was plunged into poverty. For the past thirty years, this white oligarchy has integrated the civil servants and the Zorey upper classes into the dominant ideology as well as into the extension of cultural modernism. Neil Lazarus describes this domination and power as 'capitalism and colonialism featuring as 'aspects' of the West's cultural personality' – and therefore as traces of

<sup>92</sup> See the additional works of Wieviorka, M. (1998). *La Racisme: Une introduction*. Paris: La Découverte.

<sup>93</sup> Williams, E. (1964). *Capitalism and Slavery*. London: Andre Deutsch Limited, p. 7.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>95</sup> Scott, 2002: 169.

'Westernisation' – not as the total social forms in which and through which diverse 'Western' powers arrayed themselves before and projected themselves onto 'non-Western' polities and peoples'.<sup>96</sup>

There exists a subjective denial of the autochthon which is the result of the symbolic colonial violence of class, of gender, of race and of culture. As a result of all this, the modernised and Départementalised identity has come to signify a Westernised identity, especially in cultural and ideological terms. An imitative cultural and social identity emerges. One could just as easily add another element to the assimilationist, alienating and heteronomous ideology of Départementalisation: the role of public funds from Paris which create both economic assistance and dependence, through what Edouard Glissant describes as 'production pretext'.<sup>97</sup> He believes that a 'neo-colonialist effect could result from a negligible democracy, a significant sum of money poured into the country, and an actual promotion of autochthons. Dependence [and heteronomy] are the products of a system and not of isolated individuals'.<sup>98</sup> Alice Cherki shows that this modern alienation is 'that of charity, that of social advantages in imitating everything associated with the metropolis'<sup>99</sup> which did not exist in the time of Fanon in the 1960s.

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<sup>96</sup> Lazarus, N. (2002) 'The Fetish of 'the West' in Postcolonial Theory', in Bartolovich, C. and N. Lazarus, eds. *Marxism, Modernity and Postcolonial Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 53.

<sup>97</sup> Glissant 1981: 98. My translation

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 110. My translation

<sup>99</sup> Cherki, 1999: 291. My translation



### 6.81 *A stigmatised Kaf identity*

As demonstrated before, in order to integrate within Réunionese society it is necessary to adopt the codes of creolisation in the form of transcultural contacts and hybrid forms of identity. These codes determine inclusion and exclusion, for example in the case of the new immigrants: the Zorey and the Komor. However, these mechanisms of identification are blocked and limited by racism. The stigmatisation<sup>100</sup> of the Kaf identity forms part of this collective identity formation and construction. Therefore there is also an identity de-formation and de-construction. This results in the Kaf internalising the stigma attached to their black identity, which in turn explains the racism of those same Kaf towards the Komor.<sup>101</sup> They do not recognise themselves as black, but direct their rejection of blackness against the Komor who they see as black. A plural society does not necessarily imply that each segment is equally valued. For the time being, the Komor are not part of the creolisation<sup>102</sup> process, as a consequence of the psychological mechanism of identification with the aggressor.<sup>103</sup>

The Réunionnais display a dual identity: Creole in the private domain and French in the public domain. These two facets of identity may eventually come into

<sup>100</sup> Goffman, E. (1975). *Stigmates. Les Usages Sociaux des Handicaps*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

<sup>101</sup> See Médéa, L. (2004). 'From Slavery to French Suburbia in the Tropics: Black Identity Formation in La Réunion'. Publication of paper presented at the conference at the University of Davis, USA, March 2002, on *Blackness in Global Contexts* (Forthcoming).

<sup>102</sup> On the basis of my sociological studies carried out on the subject, and from my experience in South Africa in the capacity of researcher, I establish here a parallel with the condescending attitudes that certain francophone refugee Africans display towards black South Africans. This condescension stems from their French cultural education (see the works of Erasmus, Z. 2003).

<sup>103</sup> See Médéa, L. (2002). 'Créolisation and Globalisation in a Neo-Colonial Context: the Case of La Réunion', *Social Identities*, Vol. 8, n°1, pp. 125-141. See also Médéa, L. (2003). 'La construction de l'identité dans la société réunionnaise', *Le Journal des Anthropologues*, pp. 92-93.

conflict, as emphasized by Constant: 'the cultural and identity diversity structures [...] the public sphere which would be colonised by visions which are distinctive, concurrent and conflictual'.<sup>104</sup> Michel Wieviorka emphasizes that

'the identities which affirm, overturning the shame or the stigmatisation which banished them to the margins of the public domain, in private life, assume a role which is necessarily collective; but they cannot be understood without reference to individual subjects who acknowledge them, very often investing in their decision, the form of an engagement'.<sup>105</sup>

Identity is neither phenotypical nor genetic, but composed of a class cultural heritage. Métissage is promoted, and has positive connotations within an encomium policy in contrast with the South African situation during the Apartheid era, where métissage was frowned upon. The Réunionnais have to juggle two, three or even four identities as seen in the survey results. Stuart Hall ascribes this social phenomenon to the fact that these identities resemble one another while at the same time exhibiting differences which make them unique. According to him, these identities are centred around two axes or vectors, 'the vector of similarity and continuity and the vector of difference and rupture'.<sup>106</sup>

The Creole language is fundamental to the Réunionese identity. The evolution of the Creole language may offer us an image of the evolution of the Creole culture, and therefore of the overall Creole identity, as defined by creolisation. In this case creolisation must be considered a founding principle of Réunionese history around

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<sup>104</sup> Constant, 2000: 34. My translation

<sup>105</sup> Wieviorka, 2001: 13. My translation

<sup>106</sup> Hall, S. (1990). 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in Rutherford, J. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 113

which collective memory is organised. A unified, universalist and Western vision appears to be the enemy of multiculturalism, diversity, métissage and creolisation. Equally, Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism is the enemy of métissage and creolisation.<sup>107</sup>

#### *6.82 Kaf identity, the essence of Réunionnais cultural identity*

As shown in Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5, Kaf cultural identity is the essence of Réunionese and Creole cultural identity. However, in Réunion, the affirmation of Creole and Kaf identity in the public sphere has always alarmed the State institutions. Due to fear of losing part of its territorial empire, France reinforces the island's status through the presence of French flags and the non-recognition of a regional flag (my survey shows the contrary on the question of regional flag in Table 5.3) and through a preponderance of people from metropolitan France in administrative posts as well as in decision-making posts in all sectors in Réunion. The French flag as the first representation of France in Réunion shown in Table 4.14 is a very important cultural Western symbol which brings the French values. There is an assimilation of this Western symbol which result in the French presence being perceived as natural, positive and peaceful. This flag also corresponds to a glorification of Western and French civilization in form of the French language, morals, customs and lifestyles. Furthermore, autochthonous people who have reached the ruling class are indoctrinated with the values of metropolitan France.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> See Médée, L. (2003).

<sup>108</sup> See Fanon, F. (1962).

As similarly explained by Foucault in *Les Mots et Les Choses*,<sup>109</sup> these Réunionnais subjects have assimilated and internalised Western norms and values which now form part of their social identities and everyday desires. As Heins maintains, 'at the heart of the identity of modern man lies a vivid image of pathological desires: unproductive, rebellious and threatening'.<sup>110</sup>

There is a 'non-desire' which extends to a complete rejection of the Kaf identity in the Réunionese identity. At present it has nearly been ousted from the public arena and from the collective cultural identity. Knowledge, history, symbols and vestiges of a Kaf past do not exist in the collective memory, nor indeed in that of the Réunionnais individual. Within the Réunionnais social structure, an individual with a Kaf identity is subjected to alienation, and is forced to attempt to conceal his background.<sup>111</sup> The Cartesian dimension of the Kaf identity (thought, reason and existence) is rejected in Réunion, as it is an act of consciousness which calls into question a mastery of knowledge by the dominant class as can be seen in various works on racism toward the Kaf in Réunion.<sup>112</sup>

For some, forms of freedom born of the abolition of slavery and Départementalisation have been retracted by domination. The Kaf is still not treated as an individual in his own right. As long as his Afro-Malgache origins are

<sup>109</sup> See Foucault, M. (1966). *Les Mots et les Choses*. Paris: Gallimard.

<sup>110</sup> Heins, 1998: 437.

<sup>111</sup> See for instance the project of Andre Thien Ah Koun with Plaine des Cafres.

<sup>112</sup> See the work of Nicol, R-M. (1992). *Noirs, Cafres et Créoles: Études de la Représentation du Non-Blanc Réunionnais, Documents et Littératures Réunionnaises: 1710-1980*. Thèse de Doctorat. Université de La Réunion et Aix-Marseille; Mayoka, P. (1997) *L'Image du Cafre. De l'Afrique Réunionnaise*. St-Denis: Hibiscus; Labache, L. (1997). *L'Éthnicité à La Réunion: Vers un melting-pot?* Thèse de Doctorat. Paris: EHESS; Beyssière, P. (2001). *Vingt décembre: le jour où La Réunion se souvient*, Paris: L'Harmattan; and Finch, H. (2003). *Les Enjeux et les Modalités dans la Mondialisation d'une Identité Collective 'Kaf' à l'Île de La Réunion*. Mémoire de DEA en Sciences Sociales. Université de Marneville. Sous la dir. De J. Cheyronnaud.

not recognised, or his black colour accepted in people's minds and in the public arena, there will be no equality, and racism will continue in this French Département. All the plaques and statutes unveiled during the celebrations on 20 December 1998 for the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abolition of slavery in Réunion have been broken or defaced with graffiti which is very revealing.<sup>113</sup> Until these origins are recognised in the Réunionnais cultural identity, neither a national nor identity awareness will exist and the propagation of domination will continue. During the construction of Départementalism under Debré, all references to Kaf, to Africa and to Madagascar were effaced; for example references to the Moring,<sup>114</sup> the carnival and Maloya and Afro-Malgache music. Only a few instances of Kaf identity have survived, thanks to a form of cultural *marronage* (marooning referring to escaped slaves), such as practices of Maloya in the *fénoir* (night-time) or during *servis malgas* (Kaf religious practices). The aim of institutions was to efface from the collective memory all traces of Africa and of Madagascar, all traces of slavery, all traces of the Kaf cultural identity during Départementalisation.

Cultural practices and social differentiations show that domination has been internalised by individuals and groups, appearing in colonial structures since the era of slavery. Réunion's case is not an isolated one; as Bourdieu says, all societies consist of the dominators and the dominated.<sup>115</sup> In the multicultural Réunionnais social field, the White has always been the dominator and the Black the dominated,

<sup>113</sup> The cultural association Rasin Kaf complained to the court against these acts in 2002.

<sup>114</sup> Moring is a mixed form of dancing and martial arts very similar to Capoeira of Brazil.

<sup>115</sup> See Bourdieu, P. (1989). *La Noblesse d'Etat. Grandes Ecoles et l'esprit de Corps*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

sociologically or psychologically, regardless of 'spaces of difference'. In this context, to the economic capital and the cultural capital <sup>116</sup> already detained by White people, are added the capital of identity and social capital to which access is also refused to Black people. Whether it be a fear of autonomy or of independence, this is internalised by the Réunionnais who feared being 'abandoned' by France during the 1960s and 1970s as shown by the cries of '*larg' pa nou*' and '*coup' pa nou*' ('Don't abandon us' and 'Don't cut us off') which is the consequence of paternalism. This fear is continued today, as a fear of the future.<sup>117</sup> Fear has been engendered in Réunionese society by Debré's politics of intimidation.

Since Départementalisation, these fears have led to a sociological and philosophical insecurity which impedes effort. The fear of no longer receiving money, or of losing one's job, results from dependence on welfare to the point where no initiative is shown by individuals. Charity-based assistance created by the State has a large impact on individual identity construction. Here I return to Foucault who feels that the State exerts its power and uses it to maintain itself and not to promote the freedom of its subjects. This can extend to losing autochthonic responsibility. In Réunion this is manifest in the Kaf individual losing any frame of reference. This results in loss of knowledge and the individual's identity becoming dormant and nullified in the process. The construction and formation of the Kaf individual identity and of that of the Réunionnais in general have taken place in this

<sup>116</sup> See Bourdieu, P. (1979). *La Distinction. Critique Sociale du Jugement*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.

See also Bourdieu, P. (1980). 'Le Capital Social. Notes Provisoires'. *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, n 31.

See also (2000). *Les Structures Sociales de l'Économie*. Paris: Le Seuil.

<sup>117</sup> See the work of Prosperé Eve on fear in Réunion from the time of slavery until the 1950s.

manner. A 'strategy of reproduction' has come about. The University of Réunion for example, is no longer an arena for the promotion of linguistic and social equalities, but a place which perpetuates the system of 'social propagation'. Furthermore, there are no Kaf lecturers or professors. Kaf individuals are cleaners, gardeners or security guards.<sup>118</sup> Bernard Chérubini sees symbolic capital as an indicator of both social stratification and evolution in this society. He believes that a symbolic construction of identity allows us to place ourselves in the hierarchy of memberships of the individual. 'The superimposition of memberships (allegiances) and appearances [...] is hierarchical, creating stratified collective identities which may be reconstructed according to circumstances and political ideologies, themselves stratified according to context'.<sup>119</sup>

Is the situation of colonial oppression a class problem? It seems that the answer is positive, as I have observed a distinction in each category based on economic capital: between the Petit Blanc and the Gros Blanc,<sup>120</sup> the Tamoul and the Malbar,<sup>121</sup> or even the Kaf and the Africans, Komor or Malgaches. But what can be said in the case of the Kaf who find themselves in a lower social class and are the

<sup>118</sup> Personal observations made when I was studying at the University of Réunion before 1998 but also during my fieldwork in 2002.

<sup>119</sup> Chérubini, B. (1996). 'La Construction Symbolique des Identités dans Le Monde Créole: Exemples Réunionnais', in Carerini, A. et J.-P. Jardel, eds. *De La Tradition à La Post-Modernité*. Paris: PUF. P. 279. My translation.

<sup>120</sup> Originally this distinction expressed the difference between wealthy landowners and those of modest means, but at a later stage, the Gros Blanc were those who rose to a higher social level during the economic crisis. For certain Petit and Gros Blanc, the difference lay between the 'Créoles' who were descended from the Malagasy woman Louise Siarane (Petit Blanc) and those descended from the French woman Françoise Châtelain (Gros Blanc). These two women had 7 different French husbands between 1668 and 1696.

<sup>121</sup> In Réunion, the Réunionnais of Indian origin (indentured labourers in majority 'untouchables' or 'Dalits' of region of Tamil Nadu, South-East) have not established the caste system which one finds in continental India or in Mauritius (for example indentured labourers in majority from the region of Bihar, North-East of India). However wealth has established another system based on, for example profession or land inheritance. Marriages between Indians of different economic status are difficult if not impossible. Hence the separation between Tamoul and Malbar in terms of religion (rejection of Catholicism in favour of Hinduism only), identity, values, styles and ways of life or nationalism.

most oppressed, themselves oppressing the Komor? Here, racial oppression is based on membership of both a social and economic class. Frantz Fanon<sup>122</sup> demonstrated conclusively in *The Wretched of the Earth* that colonial oppression was orchestrated by an arriviste and opportunistic bourgeois middle-class in collusion with the bourgeoisie and politics of Metropolitan France. Nevertheless some cultural activists do work on the valorisation of the Kaf in the public sphere.

### 6.9 Conclusion

French government is in contradiction with itself. This produces tensions and opposition to their aims, which permits the cultural resistance from activists. These social practices, which represent resistance and surrender to the hegemony as theoretically explained in Chapter 1, show the contradictory behaviour of dominant people. Zorey and Gros Blanc do not recognise their racist behaviour. Somehow there is no sphere for resistance among the Kaf ethnic group. They do not desire domination, but try to conform in the public sphere. The Kaf are not mobilised to form resistance movements since there is an absence of wide-spread public racial and ethnic conflict such as was found in South Africa or the United States. This results in the Kaf identity avoiding the possibility of mass mobilisation.

Following the joining of Africa, Asia, Europe, Madagascar and India brought about by new communication technologies and the development of modes of

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<sup>122</sup> Frantz Fanon came from a bourgeoisie Martinique family. His mother was of mixed blood. See also the work of Cherki, A. (1999). *Frantz Fanon Portrait*. Paris: Le Seuil.



transport, Réunionnais subjects are increasingly expressing themselves and laying claim to a need for identity. The identity of a person on Réunion is defined through class, ethnic origin, the colour of one's skin, sexual identity, religion, the representation of the Other by the Other, colonial and neo-colonial influence, in space and time, in a relationship between dominator and dominated, with an absence of indigenous and autochthonous identity since all the island's inhabitants are of immigrant origins. All this leads me to conclude that culture was one of the major factors in the process of Westernisation and socialisation of the Réunionnais through colonialism and neo-colonialism. This could explain why the suffering identity must juggle between that of the metropolis, that of Réunion and of the country of origin. Although the majority of people totally refuse to recognise the Kaf culture and identity, I believe that these do indeed constitute the essence and foundation of the Réunionese Creole culture and language as shown in my general conclusion and Figure 5.1 of Chapter 5. This can be deduced from the analysis of my questionnaire. The predominant place of identity in the Kaf culture, right from the outset of the construction and formation of identity, could be defined as a 'cultural Kafrinisation' process, even if it is an unconscious one. Nevertheless in the present day racism toward the Kaf still exists and is manifest through domination and integration. This is a different form of racism against black people to that seen in the USA and South Africa which was based more on segregation and exclusion.

Today, the Réunionnais identity, which tends more and more to qualify as a métis identity, is based on intra-community foundations and links created, invented

and formed during the days of slavery and indentureship to which symbolic French representations have been added. The métis cultural identity is therefore in a state of perpetual evolution in symbiosis with its society, adapting itself to the evolution of its history. Behind the notion of a métis identity, claimed and praised by both institutions and individuals, lies a will to fuse the different components of identity into a single concept, which, as Alfredo Valladão said with reference to Brazil, leads us to think that on Réunion: 'the métis identity [...] is one of the current forms which is the most accomplished of European universalism'.<sup>123</sup> This form of European universalism is manifest by the negation of all non-European identities, but more particularly by a rejection of the Kaf identity.<sup>124</sup> In not seeking the equality which would pass for a valorisation of the Réunionnais man or woman, European hegemony in the social structure is renewed, and perpetuates the racial, ethnic and cultural superiority complex which dates from slavery, colonialism and Départementalisation. As Dirlik emphasises: '[neo-colonialists and] post-colonists make no secret of the prominence they assign to culture in the importance they place on identity formations and their negotiations'.<sup>125</sup>

It thus appears that the only true 'national' identity existing in Réunion is a culinary and musical one. Maloya represented by Daniel Waro, Gramoun Lélé and others, is a folkloric 'national' identity, because in the collective memory it has no

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<sup>123</sup> Vallado, 1996: 42. My translation

<sup>124</sup> We have to bear in mind that the Malbar and Petit Blanc identities are also rejected as autonomous identities. The Tamoul identity that we distinguish from Malbar identity is, from its perspective, becoming increasingly folklorised through *Dinoul* on the same level as *Fet Kaf*.

<sup>125</sup> Dirlik, 1999: 26.

symbolical substance in the political identity. Squarzoni and Bertile feel that decolonisation has come about through Départementalisation that it was an 'alternative to independence'<sup>126</sup> just as it was for the other DOM and TOM. It appears, on the contrary, that decolonisation might be expressed by an even stronger dependence since 1946. In fact, Réunion is completely dependent on France, unable to plan for its own future. The different explanations called into question above demonstrate that decolonisation through integration with France has caused disintegration<sup>127</sup> in the Réunionnais society and identity. Fanon described Départementalisation as 'false decolonisation' because it was not accompanied by a 'process of democratisation', as power and knowledge have remained with the same dominators and are not democratised.<sup>128</sup>

Nevertheless, this 'decolonisation' radically changed social, economic, cultural and political social structures in Réunion. Jean Houbert maintains that 'if decolonisation signifies the self-determination of individuals 'freely' choosing through the ballot box to be dependent, Départementalisation has succeeded. But if decolonisation is a radical transformation of the internal structure of society leading to real independence, then Départementalisation has strengthened the colonial situation in Réunion'.<sup>129</sup>

Current Réunionnais society is the most accomplished and ultimate form of European hegemonic colonialism, where the neo-colonised can no longer live

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<sup>126</sup> Hintjens, 1995, p. 4.

<sup>127</sup> See Houbert, J. (1980).

<sup>128</sup> See Fanon, F. (1962).

<sup>129</sup> Houbert, 1980: 344.

without the presence of the neo-coloniser. Réunion has become a French suburb in the tropics with similar problems; it has become a province of Europe and France:

'To attempt to provincialize this 'Europe' is to view the modern as inevitably contested, to write over the given and favoured narratives of the citizenry other narratives of human connections which draw sustenance from imagined pasts and futures where collectivities are defined neither by the rituals of citizenship nor by the nightmare of 'tradition' that 'modernity' creates'.<sup>130</sup>

Furthermore, Richard Burton thinks that 'with the incorporation of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Guyane [and Réunion] into the unified European market in January 1993, a new and unpredictable chapter in the "family romance" of French West Indian history has begun'.<sup>131</sup> After all is said and done, can one really consider the so-called neo-countries as free of colonialism or from a colonial heritage? All the discourses and practices of former colonies still have a lot of bearing on the subjects with the damage caused by Eurocentric and racist condescension towards these 'colonised' or ex-colonised people. Homi Bhabha affirms that in putting forward neo-colonial debates on elitism and Eurocentrism: 'there is a damaging and self-defeating assumption that theory is necessarily the language of the elite, of the socially and culturally privileged. This seems to prove that academic criticisms can only take place through the Eurocentric archives of an imperialist or neo-colonial West'.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Chakrabarty, D. (1992). 'Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?', *Representations*, n° 37: 23.

<sup>131</sup> Burton, R. (1993). 'Maman-France Doudou': Family Images in French West Indian Colonial Discourse', *Diasporics*, 23-3, p. 89.

<sup>132</sup> Bhabha, 1994: 19.

It is not because a people shares the same language that it has the same culture, the same tradition, the same style of living and thought, in short, the same cultural identity. Nevertheless, throughout its history, Réunion has demonstrated a considerable capacity for integration. The aim is not to revolutionize or to eliminate social classes, but to create an awareness in each individual of its identity, in order that it may attain a state of 'identity vigilance', an attitude illustrated by the reactions of cultural associations to the project of the deputy-mayor of Tampon. Whatever the social class, I have noted an awakening in identity consciousness led by cultural activists associations, or rather a state of semi-drowsiness approaching an awakening on Réunion. This vigilance will enable an intersecting and overlapping of each social class and its subjects in the Réunionese social space. It will also promote a better knowledge of the different constitutive identities of the collective identity, and an ability to isolate in order to reject all racist and dominant ideologies. This vigilance of individual identity will reinforce both the collective identity as well as the national identity.

## CHAPTER VII

### General Conclusion

#### 7.1 Identity formation, creolisation and after?

The initial intention behind the body of research presented in this thesis was to provide an analysis of the formation of Réunionese identity throughout its history, before and after Départementalisation, showing how the identity changed and developed over these periods. The original assumption was that after the late nineteenth century, Réunionese identity continually evolved through the twentieth century with new departures, such as the rise of the activist movement in the 1970s. With the evidence failing to confirm these initial hypotheses based on orthodox approaches within the discipline, a reconceptualisation of Réunionese identity, its nature and history was clearly necessary. The broad argument of the dissertation has been substantiated through a combination of thematic analyses covering the entire period under review in the first two chapters and a series of focused case studies presented in chronological order in the rest of the thesis.

In support of this contention, I have argued that the Réunionese plantation society, a society driven by sugar production throughout the colonial period, contributed to the birth of a multi-ethnic society. This plantation society was

replaced by Départementalisation, which redefined the Creole identity born in the colonial period. Réunion seems to have moved directly from a pre-industrial to a post-industrial society. This implies a transition from primary to tertiary economic sector dominance. Political assimilation is likely to continue, so long as both parties benefit from the arrangement. The investigation showed that the economic upheavals caused first by Départementalisation, then by contemporary globalisation have had, and still have, an important influence on the development of a Réunionese identity.

Globalisation, insofar as it accommodates increased cultural and other exchanges between people, simultaneously produces regional and local bursts of identity. These are demonstrated in a return to ancestral cultural values evident among certain sections of the population since the beginning of the 1990s. The relationship between globalisation and cultural identities is delicate. The intersection is positive in that it helps to avoid the kind of impoverishment brought about by the uniformity of a consumer society, though without allowing the defence of an identity to turn into intolerance or racism. In Réunion, the economic system imposed by Départementalisation has created a culture of dependence in which autonomy comes to be perceived in the collective imagination as a negative or even a dangerous notion. Dependence, on the other hand, is perceived as an advantage because it is associated with financial security. The term 'dependence' has come to have a positive connotation whereas the terms 'independence' and 'autonomy' have come to have a negative one.

According to Edouard Glissant,<sup>1</sup> dependence is the product of a system. I note that all ambivalence surrounding the cultural consequences of assimilation is built on an opposition between the cultural identity that seems to some extent to have resisted cultural assimilation and the everyday economic behaviour that is a testament to the success of assimilation. This can be summed up as follows: the majority of Réunionese people desire integration into French and European economic space, but within the same space are trying to resist being integrated at the cultural level. One sees the same pattern with immigrants in large Western cities who seek citizenship and economic integration, but without cultural assimilation. At the moment, the perverse effects of the situation in Réunion are as follows: a Réunionese way of thinking is still marked by a rural mentality,<sup>2</sup> while the material means are out of kilter with local needs. In the present context of globalisation, uniformity of lifestyles tends to take precedence over cultural differentiation in Réunion.

While observing cultural creolisation as a worldwide phenomenon, globalisation has likewise tended to impose a single economic system characterised by exclusion and support.<sup>3</sup> Globalisation is a notion popularised by international financial interests, mass media and the Internet. It reveals a multiplication of exchanges through, inter alia, rapid transport and communication. Meanwhile, the media play

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<sup>1</sup> See Glissant, E. (1997). *Traité du Tout-Monde*, Paris: Gallimard.

<sup>2</sup> 'Rural mentality' is not negative or inferior to urban in Réunion, it is the contrary because it means the purity of Creole culture, Creole food, Creole life and tradition, in contact with nature in the Highlands.

<sup>3</sup> See Robertson, R. (1992).



an essential role in linking a dominant cultural model to a dominant economic model, for they create the new public sphere in which this differentiation occurs.

Creolisation can be seen as a sociological term linked to rapid cultural change and adoption under the impact of globalisation. I have engaged with Hannerz's argument that creolisation creates a meeting point with 'popular culture'. This contextualisation can also explain how the superficial influences of media today can 'create new social relations and contexts'.<sup>4</sup> Creolisation can now illustrate the global culture or 'global ecumene', as Hannerz explained, thereby expressing the general process of transnational cultural mixture, hybridisation, syncretism and métissage.<sup>5</sup> Originating during slavery and colonisation in the dynamic 'peripheries' such as the Caribbean and Indian Ocean islands; this phenomenon has begun to shift to the multiple 'centres' where a global cultural identity is being fashioned. Creole culture can develop within this new culture community in these multicultural societies. Creolisation is thus developing in the urban centres of global megalopolises linked with transnational migrations over the past forty years. This new world system is characterised by Creole languages and cultures emerging everywhere on the planet.<sup>6</sup>

Following Hannerz, I would propose the use of the concept of creolisation for the analysis of cultural and ethnic contacts and complexities in many societies.

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<sup>4</sup> Hannerz, U. (1987). 'The World in Creolization', *Africa*, 57 (4), p. 555

<sup>5</sup> See Hannerz, U. (1996). *Transnational connections: culture, people, places*. London: Routledge.

See also (2000). 'Flows, Boundaries and Hybrids: Keywords in Transnational Anthropology'. Paper available online from *Transnational Communities Programme*, Working Paper Series, Edited by Ali Rogers. In <http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/workingpapers/hannerz.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> See Hall, S. (1993) and Glissant, E. (1996)

'Pure' Réunionese identity does not exist; it is a product of a '*logique métisse*'.<sup>7</sup> Métissage is hard to live with because the individual is in a multi-membership cultural situation while seeking to place himself or herself within a French identity.

## 7.2 Main findings and the solution of the problematic

The first problematic addressed was 'what is the role of creolisation in the process of identity formation in a neo-colonial setting?' My analysis in the first part of Chapter 2 presents evidence of the dynamic of identity formation in this group, which is governed by their positions in the society and is controlled by the public discourse of the State and power. I demonstrate that identity construction has developed through the imposition of various aspects of French culture and politics and operates at a symbolic level. Despite a diversity of cultures and identities, the aim of the government is to promote a single French identity. In a colonisation process, identity formation represents the mobilisation of the mass of the population and cannot be fully controlled by the State.

It appears, on the contrary, as demonstrated in Chapter 6, that decolonisation might result in an even stronger dependence. Discourse has theorised and improved the comprehension of this new dependence, 'the passion to prove, to remove the consent of the dominant, to despise by subtlety is the sign and the major substratum of this effort, which can only be applied to small countries'.<sup>8</sup> In fact, Réunion is

<sup>7</sup> See Amaelle, J.-L. (1996). *Logique Métisse*. Paris: Payot.

<sup>8</sup> Glissant, 1997: 108. My translation.

unable to initiate anything without France due to its financial and social insecurity. The different explanations called into question above demonstrate that decolonisation through integration with France has caused greater disintegration of Réunionese society and identity. Nevertheless, this decolonisation radically changed economic, cultural and political social structures in Réunion. I conclude that current Réunionnais society is the most accomplished and ultimate form of European hegemonic colonialism, where the neo-colonised can no longer live without the presence of the neo-coloniser.

Départementalisation is also a 'fetishization of the West by [...] the desire to provincialize Europe',<sup>9</sup> in this case a province of France. The discourses and practices of former colonies still have considerable bearing on the subjects, in terms of the damage caused by Eurocentric and racist condescension towards these neo-colonised people. My aim is not to revolutionise or to eliminate social classes, but to create an awareness in each individual of his identity, in order that he may attain a state of 'identity vigilance'. This vigilance will enable an intersecting and overlapping of each social class and its subjects in the Réunionese social space. It will also promote a better knowledge of the different constitutive identities of the collective identity, and an ability to isolate these in order to reject all racist and dominant ideologies. This vigilance of individual identity will reinforce the collective identity as well as the national identity. As shown in Chapter 2, one needs to justify the identity category as an operational concept in a narrow sense. It is due to this social

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<sup>9</sup> Lazarus, 2002: 59 and Chakrabarty, 1992: 14.

creolisation that a margin of social, economic, political and cultural autonomy from metropolitan France is possible.

The second problematic addressed was 'how is Réunionese society founded on creolisation characterized in the collective memory?' In Chapter 2, I show that Réunionese social identity formation is about prejudice, which might sporadically have to do with an oppressed group's collective resistance. In fact, collective identities give the impression of being less essential the more control or power a group has. If one traces identity formation in Réunionese society back through history one can see that the categories recorded are related to the social creolisation process with its social transformation and identity assertions. In Chapter 3, I argue that in Réunion living with cultural differences forms part of people's social practices in the public and private spheres, and it is therefore an essential part of their cultural, social and political identity. Through analysis of language, one can see the evolution of culture from its formation to its decline in the past, present and future. Chapter 3 clearly established that the nuanced portrayal of Réunionese identity in the political realm is able to control languages and lifestyle, but its effects are debatable regarding the cultural identity of individuals or groups.

The transcultural concept of cultural creolisation is currently having a massive impact on identity in Réunion. The process of transculturation intersects many areas of life and begins with language, especially in the formation of the Creole language, created and transformed over time and space, as part of a specific social identity.

The Réunionnais claim a métis identity, and that the essence of their culture is based on this métis identity. However, they completely refuse to recognise the Kaf culture and identity, which constitutes the foundation of the Réunionese Creole cultural identity and language. The predominant place of identity in the Kaf culture, right from the origin of this form of identity as found in Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5, could be defined as a cultural 'kafrinisation' process, even if it is an unconscious one. The result has been that while the intention to elucidate the ways in which 'kafrinisation' and 'kafritude' operate as a social identity has remained, in reality the study of this phenomenon was limited to the era of French rule.

The third problematic was 'how can identity segment into several identities, or alternatively how several identities can converge into one identity in different spaces?' I maintained in Chapter 2 that the formation of cultural identity is dependent on the presence of the Other group. The chapter mapped out in some detail how the existence of the Other group is particularly important in the formation of a cultural identity, and it is throughout his or her existence that a subject can develop a consciousness of their own ethnic identity. I demonstrated that in Réunion, slavery and the colonial period were fundamental in this process of identity formation in which the Creole language also played an important role. Before the affirmation of different identities, there was a refusal to adopt a French official identity in Réunion. Identity and diversity go hand in hand. Cultural identity and creolisation are not statistical phenomena, but dynamic phenomena. They are

consequently progressive terms and concepts, which change in space and time. Elements such as geographical situation, education and social milieu are present in the process of identity construction. Transculturation is a cultural process resulting in heterogeneous and diverse society involved in creolisation. It is the accumulation of interactional and transactional cultural elements of many civilisations, meeting and sharing the same contact zone in a small space, which can be transposed to a larger space.

In Chapters 4 and 5 the emphasis was on the detailed analysis of key questionnaires completed by individuals within the society. The subjects were required to contemplate the nature of Réunionese identity, and give expression to their identity as a Réunionnais subject. We have seen that beyond Réunionese Creole identity, several sub-cultures and identities exist. When confronted with French culture and language, Creole identity appears as a unified entity, but within this Creole identity there is a hierarchy of sub-identities, some of which are stigmatised.

The great value of the questionnaires is that they show that stigmatisation of the Creole language is due unconsciously to its association with the Kaf. The questionnaires indicated that some sub-cultures such as the Zarab, the Chinois and the Gros Blanc are totally disconnected from the rest of the groups in terms of Réunionese cultural identity and that they are closer to the Zorey group. The Gros Blanc group seems to be 'more Creole' than the Chinois and Zarab groups. According to the questionnaire data, it appears that Réunionese cultural identity is

fundamentally linked to the Kaf group. To be 'Réunionnais' means to be closer to the Kaf group and to be 'French' implies being closer to the Zorey group. It was evident in all the results regarding aspects of cultural identity such as Creole language, music, folktales, religion, and attitudes to death that the Kaf ethnic group had the strongest association with a Creole identity. The Kaf group, after it had been suppressed, through cultural associations and activists began to claim this identity as part of its culture. Unconsciously the other ethnic groups, especially the Métis, the Malbar and the Petit Blanc, tended to associate more closely with the Kaf identity. This is why, for instance, Réunionese music was also stigmatised; the questionnaire demonstrated that Maloya is the music associated with the Kaf group.

As a result of the common heritage of oppression, the subjects are entirely Réunionese and yet retain different cultures. They have had a 'hermaphrodite identity' since their birth. The inhabitants have faced a psychic uprooting and mental trauma under different forms. In Chapter 2, we see that there is underlying, resistance and conflict between the French and Creole identities. These identities are both 'hidden' and 'negotiated'. People draw these elements from their private life and want to valorise them in the public space, moving through the 'contested' sphere. The force of socialisation in these different symbolic spaces forms the identity process. Réunionnais often negotiate identities by using a situational identity and shifting between the Réunionese and French identity in the private and public sphere. In these spheres the process of social formation takes place in the context of power relations between the dominant and the subordinate. Social identity is formed

in symbolical spaces. The identity of the private sphere cannot be separated from the identity of the public sphere.

The fourth problematic to be addressed was 'how are components of Réunionese 'identity' formed through language or sociocultural, political and economic structures?' I attempted to explain in Chapter 2 that creolisation started as a linguistic term, and extended to an anthropological and sociological concept. Creolisation and decreolisation of language and culture are associated with socio-economic mobility, as I have demonstrated. In addition, mass education and mass media effected decreolisation. Therefore, economic and political choices exert a powerful influence upon the history of societies. This is exemplified by the creation of a Creole-identity model deriving from an economic evolution where the sugar plantation played an important role. I concluded by noting that cultural expressions and practices are forms of representations, which construct us as new types of people. This also corroborates other aspects of the analysis of identity outlined in my opening chapter.

In Chapter 3, I challenged the notion that today in the lower class, the Creole language continues to be present in social life, along with cultural creolisation. The Creole language represents a natural illustration of social identity. Creolisation involves many cultures with an increasing tolerance for diversity and social change. In the same chapter, I supported the overall argument of the thesis by sustaining the assertion of Mufwene, that 'social integration has been more political than actual and



networks of social interaction have been more along ethnic-racial lines'.<sup>10</sup> In some population groups the components of identity are stronger in some individuals than in others. This may also result from arguments based on political ideology. For instance, in spite of his great work and research, Chaudenson had a strongly Eurocentric point of view on the formation of Creole language and culture in Réunion, and in other places where colonisation occurred. Recent works have confirmed the point of view in his conclusion <sup>11</sup> by arguing that the linguistic process of creolisation can be transposed to the cultural process of creolisation of Réunion. Linguistic creolisation results in the formation of Creole language, based on the French language. Chaudenson argued that Réunionese cultural creolisation is formed from French culture. I dispute this and have demonstrated in Chapter 3 that Réunionese cultural creolisation is more a product of the Afro-Malgache cultures.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I show in a similar vein that the question of Creole language is linked to the idea of revival of interest in culture and identity. This is also reflected in the case of music. The broad finding of these studies, and of the final chapter as a whole, was that the identity quest requires the valorisation of language. Language is a fundamental element in the recognition of national identity. The Creole language forms the basis of Réunionese culture, of the formation of Creole society and of the present social creolisation. Creole language plays a central role in all aspects of life in Réunion, such as social problems, education, representation and

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<sup>10</sup> Mufwene, 1999: 87.

<sup>11</sup> Chaudenson, 1992: 291.

levels of success. I have found that the *séga*, until the 1980s, formed part of the assimilationist and Départementalist discourse of the State represented by Gros Blanc and was involved in identity construction. In contrast, the *maloya* was a matter of identity formation, marked by its demanding spirit. The French language is a central part of the identity construction process and the Creole language of the identity formation process. The practice of dual religion in the present day would appear to be a phenomenon linked to social class: the lower, working and middle class practise dual religions more than the upper class.

The fifth problematic was 'how is one able to negotiate the concept of identity through the transformation of values and social relations in this society?' In the second part of the second chapter, I argued that to understand creolisation, one needs to understand the larger context of global exchanges (both contemporary and historical) as well as the colonial venture. In Réunion, there has been no real difference thus far because its people have always been exposed to several ethnic groups. Nevertheless, based on the results of my fieldwork, one can see that the older population is more affected by lack of knowledge of the Creole heritage than the Young and Adult groups, which are more familiar with a Creole heritage. These groups seem to have a greater understanding of the importance of Creole heritage and the necessity of an independent identity. The Young and Adult groups seem to have greater consciousness of their cultural identity than the older group. This is the result of the work of cultural associations. I therefore conclude that the older

population are more affected by Départementalisation policies. The Young and Adult generations are more open to 'world culture', whereas the older generation is less enthusiastic and prefers to preserve the French culture. There is also a regional aspect to this issue.

We see in Chapter 6 that an analysis of the development of language in Réunion shows that the identity of a person on the island is defined through class, ethnic origin, the colour of one's skin, religion and the relationship between dominant and dominated, in the absence of an indigenous, autochthonous identity. This leads us to the conclusion that culture has been one of the major factors in the process of Westernisation and socialisation of the Réunionnais through colonialism and neo-colonialism. This could explain why the suppressed identity must juggle between that of the metropolis, that of Réunion and that of the native culture.

Finally, the examination of creolisation has always been based on the cultivation of difference. Creole, since its formation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, has been based on the culture of the Other, where one can define a difference between Self and the Other. This is a culture made up of different cultures, which avoids the notion of an authentic culture with a single set of roots. The concept of social creolisation can be used to explain the process of social changes (using linguistic and cultural models) in relation to social frameworks and the contexts of changes. In the global creolised cultures and societies, these phenomena can enrich the identity of Self and the Other with new social organisation, improving their cultural representation by mixing homogenisation and heterogenisation in a new site of 'interstitial moments

and processes where 'difference' is articulated'.<sup>12</sup> In these new places the local, social and cultural identities (private space) form under the influence of global, social and cultural conditions (public space).

The sixth problematic was 'can cultural and social creolisation avoid hegemony and domination in a multicultural and multiethnic society such as Réunion?' The implications of current cultural identities in the social, economic and political fields in Réunion may predict a picture of the future of multiethnic society in France, and also throughout Europe. People in Réunion feel that they have multiple identities based on many differences according to my survey. Those who speak Creole, let us call these individuals 'creolophiles', are more open to a third language than those who speak only French. 'Creolophiles' are generally more open to and aware of bilingualism and tri- or even plurilingualism.

The new globalised values will need to be founded on the plurality of civilisations and cultures in order to counter 'clash of civilization conflicts'.<sup>13</sup> Cultural diversity must be accepted, protected and perceived as an essential thing in which to participate. An ethic of cultural diversity must be created and allowed to evolve alongside creolisation. The social identity of the individuals and groups in Réunion is formed in the 'contested' space, where resistance developed in the form of a hidden Creole culture. However social practices can represent both resistance and surrender to hegemony. My findings in this chapter indicate that cultural identity

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<sup>12</sup> Cohen, 1997: 129.

<sup>13</sup> Reference to Huntington, S. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

is very strong in the private sphere and is beginning to enter into the public sphere. The population is less ashamed of their identity, and more confident about expressing this identity in their interactions with the French authorities. Transculturalism and creolisation must be acknowledged as a social reality in the symbolic space in order to confront power and domination in Réunion. In this way, Réunion is a good example for those Western megalopolises that wish to fight racism and understand multiculturalism.

### 7.3 Implications of the survey: normative considerations

In the contemporary period, globalisation is rapidly transforming the sociocultural creolisation process throughout the world. I have shown that cultural identities can be defended by developing local cultures that enrich the universal culture. This means embodying values that are common to all cultures in order to allow the culture of modernity, of progress and of universal values to bloom. But globalisation also supports the emergence of new cultural modes and lifestyles.<sup>14</sup> As Sidney Mintz says, 'in the absence of the full structure of their societies of origin, the cultural situation of displaced peoples must be rebuilt'.<sup>15</sup>

Many regions of the world are at present undergoing an identity crisis that is expressed through an exaggerated form of nationalism. It is necessary to understand this force which competes with regionalism. An open form of regionalism could

<sup>14</sup> See Médès, L. (2004). 'La Culture Créole Francophone. Une vision panoramique dans les Départements Français d'Outre-Mer'. Publication of paper presented at the conference of l'Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris, France, mars 2002, on *Les Originaux d'Outre-Mer*. (Forthcoming).

<sup>15</sup> Mintz, S. (1996). *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom*, Boston: Beacon Press. p. 305.

help to re-establish a certain balance in international relations. The process of globalisation implies numerous local actors and there is no doubt that the coherence of their actions rests on accepting métissage and on recognising Otherness. Appadurai conceptualises it as 'the seamless interactions of localised spaces and times with local subjects possessed of the knowledge to reproduce a locality'.<sup>16</sup> An informed society does not bring the risk of impoverishment and standardisation. It can provide an opportunity to respect cultural diversity, even if cultural domination today relies on the information and communication channels of the North.

The case of creolisation in Réunion illustrates that globalisation cannot destroy the renewal of identity and cultural feelings, even within the framework of integration into another society. Réunionese society is in the process of adopting a European and American culture due to the globalisation of communication and exchanges, while at the same time retaining its ancestral identities and cultures, a permanent European identity and an Indian-Oceanic identity.

It should also be acknowledged that when one ascends the social scale the Creole language is rejected. The Creole language is not likely to disappear in the lower class, but it will probably disappear in a proportion of the middle class and especially in the upper class.

In the case of Cuba, St-Domingue, Haiti or Puerto Rico, the English language is gaining more and more importance. UNESCO asserts that more than twenty eight

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<sup>16</sup> Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: UMP, p 123.

languages disappear each year.<sup>17</sup> It is quite possible that the Creole language will be in this position next century. When a language of a people disappears it also implies a disappearance of a culture. Other research has indicated that the French language is being spoken less and less in some former French colonies in favour of English: for example Mauritius, Haiti, Caribbean, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, Vietnam, Cambodia and Guinea. French is being used less as English has increasingly become the language of business and the international hegemonic language.

Having mentioned the impact of a Western model of Départementalisation on Réunionese creolisation, I shall now attempt to predict how the policy of assimilation will affect future economic, political and cultural developments. One response to the arrival of Western culture was that several identity movements, differentiated by region and the period in which they were formed, came to the fore. The first to appear was born from a passion of the first generation of Réunionese intellectuals to find a concept that would for the first time increase the standing of a Creole identity and language. Creole language writing systems, as illustrated in Chapter 3.4, were developed in order to enhance its power and legitimacy in Réunion. This illustrates the power of language and its ability to control society. The 'k', 'w', 'y' and 'z' <sup>18</sup> are relatively exotic graphemes in the French orthographic system which endows them with a symbolical value. These letters have a purely

<sup>17</sup> See 'Langues en Danger' on the website of UNESCO visited on the 2 December 2003 on [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/fr/ev.php?URL\\_ID=270&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/fr/ev.php?URL_ID=270&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

<sup>18</sup> Manmoutou, J.-C. (1992). *Métissage. Littérature-Histoire*. T.1. Université de La Réunion. Paris: L'Harmattan.

identity related function.<sup>19</sup> By marking differences from the French writing system, its users seek to show that the Creole language is not a patois and is not dependent on French. From my survey it can be seen that the 'k', 'w', 'y' and 'z' are drawn from the language, pronunciations and accents of the Kaf as well as the Malbar and Métis groups. Robert Chaudenson has demonstrated the close relationship between a language and its culture. The avoidance of Creole language is therefore indicative of the rejection of the Kaf culture and identity. Since Kaf is the essence of Réunionese and Creole cultural identity defenders of the French language unconsciously impose the French culture to the detriment of Creole culture and language and, by extension Kaf culture and language. The avoidance of Creole writing systems demonstrates a psychological block on the part of non-Creole speakers. They demonstrate a rejection of the Creole language due to a conflicting ideology which holds the belief that Creole is inferior to their own language and not worthy of study. This shows a linguistic 'apartheid' involving the segregation of different language speakers.

This may lead to a linguistic genocide and therefore a cultural genocide. It is based on a fear of the domination of black (Kaf) values and norms over white (French and Gros Blanc) values in Réunionese society. This merely propagates domination of White on Black as seen during slavery and colonialism. It is a linguistic and cultural racism and by extension it is unconscious racism against the Kaf, Africans, Malagasies, Malbar and all black people.

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<sup>19</sup> Manmoutou, 1992: 257.



Today all these things form the basis of political debate and language is still used as a tool for identity struggle. Moreover, it is a question of social class in the public sphere. However, according to Edouard Glissant:

'the problem is not so much to decide for the Creole language a transcription mode (phonetic, etymological, inter-dialectal) but to liberate the Creole language practice by a revolution of Structure of Social working. The problem is certainly not to 'Creolise' the French or English language but to introduce a guided usage by a clean economy (ability, powers) a creator practice. All practice of a language leads to a control only if it is founded on a technical responsibility. The language is a creation tool.<sup>20</sup>

Paradoxically, the arrival of Western culture in the 1960s revealed an underlying Réunionese culture and laid the foundations for the first identity demands that were feasible in reality. For the first thirty years of Réunion's existence as a Département, creolisation expressed an unconscious, almost innate resistance to the different cultures in its midst, which was translated into a deep attachment to intercultural integration and relations. Despite the adoption of Western-style consumerism, Western culture has not destroyed Creole culture. This can be explained by the way in which creolisation adapts to a perpetual formation and evolution of various cultural mixes. Western culture has therefore been integrated into Creole society in the same way as other cultures. It was the strength of its mixtures that made creolisation able to resist Western influence. The arrival of Western culture with the Zorey galvanised the cultural identity of the Réunionnais and triggered cultural resistance. This resistance has managed to create a feeling of belonging to a

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<sup>20</sup> Glissant, 1997: 345. My translation.

common culture that encompasses all components of the society, even if this 'national culture' has fallen short of making a political claim.

Réunionese society is becoming dyadic. On the one hand there is a decreolisation of culture and language; a situation which is more prevalent among the Gros Blanc, Chinois, Zarab, Tamoul (and not Malbar) and Métis ethnic groups: those who are in the upper class and some of the upper-middle-class. On the other hand there is a kind of recreolisation of culture and language: a situation found among the Kaf, Petit Blanc, Malbar (and not Tamoul) and Métis ethnic groups, generally from the lower and middle classes. I might add here that there are some people who are not easily categorised in terms of ethnic and social class.

#### 7.4 The future: metropolitan hegemony versus Creole cultural nationalism

It can be concluded that the Creole Réunionese identity is the unofficial identity and the French identity is the official identity of Réunion. The aim of cultural activists is to reverse this order, while the French and Gros Blanc aim to keep this order. Two different struggles for the future of Réunion will be considered next: firstly, my view on the future of metropolitan hegemony, and secondly my prediction on the outcome of resistance by cultural activists and the Réunionnais people.

#### 7.41 Metropolitan hegemony

It looks certain that the metropolitan forces and cultural hegemony of France will be reasserted. Historically, metropolitan France has always been in a position of power through the periods of slavery and colonialism. The cultural hegemony promoted by Départementalisation has already succeeded in one sense. The privileged Zorey and Gros Blanc classes have every reason to want to continue the association with France. The continued promotion of French culture through French administration and institutions is a constant reinforcement of French ideology, hegemony, and various forms of political domination. Even at the level of the dominated classes there is evidence throughout this thesis that people accept this to some extent. At some level, the cultural hegemony symbolised by Départementalisation<sup>21</sup> and the acceptance of metropolitan French power by the rest of the population has continued.

Timagen Houat drew attention to this opposition between different components of the society and the prejudices of white colonial society as early as 1844.<sup>22</sup> He demonstrated how slavery and then the colonial mentality created antagonisms that are still present in Réunionese society, and which accentuated the dehumanisation of black people. In 1869,<sup>23</sup> Hervé demonstrated the power of the colonial machine and the system inherited from slavery. Former beneficiaries of this system are still found

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<sup>21</sup> In his pamphlet the controversial Réunionese intellectual Joseph Varoudin said that 'Départementalisation was a French crime'. See (1997), *Les Lumbrequins de la Honte. Le Crime Français: la Départementalisation*. Curepipe: Editions de l'Académie Indioocéanienne. Tome 2.

<sup>22</sup> See Houat, L.T. (1998). *Les Marrons. Orne de 14 jolis destins*, Piton St-Rose: Editions AIPIDES. (Paris: 1844, CRI: 1988).

<sup>23</sup> See Hervé, E. 1869.

in positions of authority and in private business. Since Départementalisation the Zorey have become part of the dominant sector. By contrast the other sections of the Réunionese population are still considered second-class citizens, living '9000 kilometres from France in what looks like a suburb in the tropics'.<sup>24</sup>

It has been shown that in Réunion, identity is often formed in the private sphere. Identity is a double-sided phenomenon and 'identity marooning' touches all aspects of daily life. There are some difficulties in building a genuine identity in the public sphere due to the encroachment of the State into the private sphere. Several political factors, particularly the imperialist power of France, suppress the expression of Réunionnais identity. This leads to problems with identity formation and prevents the affirmation of individual and collective identities in the public sphere. However, the maintenance of an assimilationist policy seems out of step with the contemporary world in which the virtues of multiculturalism, democracy and individual liberty are extolled. This is particularly true given that both Right- and Left-wing French policy is incongruous with global Anglo-Saxon hegemony, both economically and culturally, and in its continued influence in French overseas Départements and territories. Today, Réunion seems therefore to belong to a system still strongly marked by outdated, but still powerful, neo-colonial relationships.

Republican institutions aim to emulate a European model of government in Réunion and prescribe a nation of the European type. The dominant White

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<sup>24</sup> Vergès, F. (2001) 'Peuple créole, identité ethnique à l'île de la Réunion', in Wiewiorka, M. and J. Ohana, eds. *La Différence Culturelle. Une reformulation des débats*. Colloque de Cerisy. Paris: Balland, p. 225. My translation.

plantocracy in Réunion promotes Republican values and suppresses counter ideologies based on Kaf, Petit Blanc or Malbar identities. These are therefore not recognised in the public sphere and this reinforces White identities. Through the successive phases: Republican, post-Republican, slavery, colonialism and Départementalisation, the Zorey have maintained their White privilege and bourgeoisie status. The Zorey have used the language of the successive phases of historical French domination to re-constitute their class power. Under slavery they used the language of the slave-master relationship, under Republicanism they supported the universal ideal; under colonialism they developed a paternalistic attitude to the rest of the population, while under Départementalisation they support a form of Republicanism. At each stage, the Zorey have shifted their allegiances in terms of language and ideology to maintain their class power. Today, the Zorey have a metropolitan, neo-colonial interest and have agents in Réunion to administrate the State. Through successive phases of class superiority the Zorey have used their superior metropolitan language and access to metropolitan culture, identity and hegemonic ideology to maintain a distance between the Metropole and the periphery at the expense of groups like the Kaf, Malbar and Petit Blanc.

The media indirectly play an important role in the negative perception of Réunionese nationalism. The Zorey journalists and conservative Réunionnais in particular, are responsible for the negative designation of a more popular nationalism. They do not hesitate to attack all nationalistic acts and initiatives which are intended to improve social and cultural conditions. The Zorey are not conscious

of their intolerance of the struggle for an autochthonous national cultural identity because they are blinded by their own feelings of superiority. Specifically, they have a false understanding of Réunion as an island different from other metropolitan Départements. As the chief editor of JIR's newspaper wrote regarding the supposedly 'peaceful' model of Réunionese society, I quote: 'there is evidence that the cement of all this has been the Republic, school and the French language. It is evidence which is translated also by the exchange with other islands in the Indian Ocean zone... in French obviously. Creole language is not the cement of this society'.<sup>25</sup> The majority of the Zorey, like this chief editor, feel that the Réunionese 'coexistence is cemented by integration through the French Republican laws'.<sup>26</sup>

In November 2002, for example, several weeks of debate took place in the French Parliament in Paris among the Réunionnais UMP's Members of Parliament. These MPs defended en masse the Virapoullé amendment that was supported by the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister. This amendment prohibits all possibility of legislative autonomy. As a result, local government will not be able to formulate any 'land laws'. In the Senate and National Assembly, the members of the Communist Party of Réunion voted against the Virapoullé amendment. They asserted that this amendment was 'making the Réunionnais child-like'.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, the Right wing holds that 'Jacques Chirac respects the commitment he made during the presidential campaign. He wanted to respect the will of Réunionnais by keeping

<sup>25</sup> Jacques Tillier in *Le Jir* 08-09-2003 in <http://www.clicanoo.com/articles/article.asp?id=60413>. My translation.

<sup>26</sup> Seven of the respondents in my questionnaires expressed similar sentiments in the sphere provided for free comments at the end of the questionnaire.

<sup>27</sup> In *le JIR*, 13 December 2002, p.12. My translation.

Réunion in its existing status'.<sup>28</sup>

In the new constitution, all eventual status evolution will have to take place by compulsory vote following the popular consultation.<sup>29</sup> The concept of neo-colonialism here is even more pertinent than most imagine. Despite the forces of globalisation, despite the forces of political independence, and despite the claim to sovereignty, with this new law Réunion has become more tightly integrated and assimilated into Paris and France. The use of the term 'neo-colonialism' in Réunion's case is definitely appropriate. This is further entrenched by the increased numbers of Zorey migrating to Réunion for the last thirty years. Moreover, since recent years, many retired Zorey leave France for Réunion, in search of financial benefit and for a better quality of life. Joseph Varondin asserts that 'since 1963, France has made 185,000 Réunionnais leave their island to replace them by 125,000 Zorey. France cannot deny the fact that this invisible genocide was her aim to turn Réunion into a country populated only by Europeans'.<sup>30</sup> To echo the argument of Lucette Labache, it is evident that 'in the collective unconscious an ethnic hierarchy exists where the Zorey have their supremacy and a place where they are revocable with difficulty [...] some psychological sufferings are generated by [a] neo-colonial status layered on top of a self-imposed subjection'.<sup>31</sup> Some Réunionnais have, in recent years, been behind the constitution of a national identity, a movement that could be described as a 'de-

<sup>28</sup> Andre Thien Ah-Koon cited in le JIR, 13 December 2002, p13. My translation

<sup>29</sup> See Médée, L. (2004). 'Blue wave and closer to Paris', in Colin Legum, ed. *African Contemporary Records*, Vol. 28, New York: Africana Publishing. (Forthcoming).

<sup>30</sup> Varondin, J. A. (1991). *Les Lambréquins de la Honte. Portrait du Réunionnais Départementalisé et de son Maître*. Singapour: Editions du Marronage. Tome 1. p. 132.

<sup>31</sup> Labache, L. (2002). 'Approche d'une situation de néocolonialisme. La problématique Zoreils-Créoles à La Réunion', *L'Autre, Cliniques, Cultures et Sociétés*, Vol. 3, n° 3, p 530. My translation.

neo-colonisation'. Réunion was virgin territory 350 years ago. As a new society today, it is undergoing the same process that other societies have experienced at some point in their history. Both Réunion and these other societies have lived through a period of colonialism and subsequent hegemony with its continuous changes.

The hegemony intrinsic in Réunionese society necessitates the process of identity and symbolic space construction and formation. The dialectic of the social formation of reality has been 'adapted' to promote the cultural development of the cultural activists and the hegemony represented by Zorey and Gros Blanc.

Let me now turn to my view of the future of the cultural activists and their resulting effect on Réunion.

#### *7.42 Creole cultural nationalism*

Cultural activists are basically trying to find a way of expressing a Réunionese cultural identity, nationalism, a form of Creole language, a form of acceptance of diversity and creolisation as opposed to the uniformity of the Republican and Départementalist tradition. These sentiments are found in the lower classes but they also have a voice in the middle classes, such as in the world of journalism. While the media have generally been appropriated by the French metropolitan view, there is nevertheless some contestation visible in the world of music, as in other performing and creative arts.



Cultural activists, as shown by their actions and practices, feel strongly that metropolitan domination through Départementalisation is going to be unsuccessful because it has exhausted its historical possibilities. Creolisation combined with the forces of globalisation will damage the French metropolitan project by squeezing the French language and identity from the top through the dominance of Anglo-American capitalism and squeezing from below by reaffirming a local Creole alternative. According to my survey more and more people are recognising themselves through a Réunionese cultural identity which has emerged as a result of the effort of cultural activists but also as a result of globalisation. Their assertion of a local identity is a kind of resistance against French domination. But at the same time, the Réunionese have adopted a French lifestyle in the public sphere. Cultural activists and those who have been influenced by this cultural activism are no longer only from the lower class but we can now find activists in the Réunionese middle class intelligentsia and even in the upper-class. The cultural activists do not ask for independence and have abandoned the goal of political autonomy, but ask instead for more complex cultural autonomy.

In Réunion the cultural activists are trying to create a place for the expression of cultural and collective memory in the form of music, theatre, folktales, poetry, painting, sculpture and photography open to the society (in schools or other public places). The role of the middle class is relevant and cultural activists need recruits from this class to develop and maintain their collective memory. This will make communities conscious of the importance of the valorising of their cultural heritage

in order to facilitate transgenerational and transcultural dialogue. It will therefore contribute to social development and the continuity of democratisation in order to develop a better knowledge and understanding of the identities of the Réunionnais. This will also militate against all forms of violence. All these aspects of Réunionese social development place questions of identity and social relations at the centre of debate. Analysing such issues is difficult given the lack of a Social Sciences Department at the University of Réunion.

Cultural activists also struggle to promote the recognition of the Creole language and the cultures of each group, expressed through memories, popular imagination and the recognition of heroes hidden by colonial institutions. These play a fundamental role in the continuation of Réunionese identity formation. This can be enabled through the restructuring of the educational system. The transformation of the audio-visual and the media environment will mean that Réunionese Creole language will be validated. This transformation, led by cultural activists, will encourage the use of Creole at school, in administration and socially. People would then be able to use the language without any sense of inferiority or shame. Creole cultural identity could be official and constitute the basis of an ethnic, social and national identity. This public adoption will inhibit decreolisation or *metropolitanisation*.<sup>32</sup> The media plays an important role in public life. However, they are not playing their potential role, as it appears that the majority of mass media staff, especially most of the journalists, are Zorey.

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<sup>32</sup> See Hancock, I. F. (1985) and Mufwene, S. (1999).

The process of socialisation, which is the basis of cultural identity in the broadest sense of the term, seems to be essential in the social dynamic in Réunion, but as Poirier showed, it is specific to its location in Reunion.<sup>13</sup> In the light of this return to ancestral identities and the stirring up of identity antagonisms, cultural activists seek regional exchanges which offer a single way forward in the construction of a Réunionese identity.

There are four forms of identity based on place, space and time with historical formations.

1. The identity which is forming in the island. This first identity is connected with the creation of the Réunionese society in the island itself. This initiated at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
2. The identity linked to the relation to France. This second identity is a long historical association with metropolitan France. This started with colonialism and has strengthened with Départementalisation.
3. The identity which is linked to the ancestral homes of the different ethnic groups on the island. This third identity reaches back to the ancestral homelands. This started in the late 1970s.
4. The identity which links to other nearby parts of the Indian Ocean region. This fourth identity was born in the late 1980s and is a new understanding of regional connections.

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<sup>13</sup> See Poirier, J. et S. Fuma (1986). 'Dynamique sociale et récits de vie créole Réunionnais', 5<sup>ème</sup> colloque international des créolistes, St-Denis, avril 1986, p. 11 My translation.

If we look at the history behind identity formation in Réunion, this population formed an identity as 'displaced' from France, Madagascar, India, Asia and Africa and created a new society. Since the beginning of settlement there has always been an association with metropolitan France and now Réunionnais are beginning to define themselves not as an 'extension' of France but an Indian-Oceanic society by setting up relationships with Mauritius, Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mozambique, South Africa, China and India. Today the Réunionnais see themselves in a regional space rather than in terms of historical difference. This has also happened in other regions such as in the case of Canada, Australia or the Caribbean. These links are very symbolic since Réunion, Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guyana are still French territories. Queen Elisabeth II is still the Head of State in Australia and Canada. These regions are therefore linked in terms of economy and culture rather than by political affiliation.

Regional exchanges based on the cultural proximity of Réunion's Chinese, Indian, Muslim and Afro-Malagasy diasporas and the countries in the wider Indian Ocean could lead to fruitful commercial exchanges. In this context, activists have argued that Réunion must have a regional flag in order to enhance its own symbolical identity.<sup>34</sup> They feel that this should be a real flag and not a badge or coat of arms so it can become a space where Réunionese national identity is exercised.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> There is an association of vexillology (in connection with *Radio Pikan*, *Mét Ansam* association and *Parnomum* political party) which in 2003 held a contest for the creation of a flag for Réunion. The winner and the flag were recognised by cultural associations, but not by the French. During the Indian Ocean Games in August 2003 the Réunionese delegation was prevented from carrying this flag.

<sup>35</sup> During my fieldwork I saw five different flags within five cultural associations in Réunion.

Ideally, Réunionnais should avoid focus on power and large territories. Réunionnais need to begin to understand that their strength resides in their proximity to the countries in the wider Indian Ocean and that they need to form a network of exchanges with each other to remedy the one-sided exchange between Europe and Réunion.

Such a position is not about denying conflict and tension, but about recognising them in order to live together successfully. Réunion must remain like a 'fruit salad', a mix of tropical fruits in which one can distinguish every taste and flavour, rather than becoming a 'purée' of indistinguishable cultures. Thus, to conclude from my personal and research experience, cohabitation between different civilisations founded on knowledge and mutual respect is possible, in fact indispensable. A dialogue concerning religious and cultural values is also both necessary and essential for cooperation between different religions, ethnic groups and communities.

The inescapable conclusion which emerges from what I have said throughout this thesis is that the Réunionese cultural identity is synonymous with Creole cultural identity. Within this Réunionese cultural identity (which is fundamentally linked to the Kaf group according to my questionnaire) there are several components such as Kaf identity, Malbar identity, Petit-Blanc or Zarab identity and Chinois identity. All these identities form the Réunionese cultural identity or the Creole cultural identity as opposed to French or Mauritian cultural or Malagasy cultural identity.

The increasing number of cultural associations demonstrates that there is an evolution, which may be the consequence of a developing political consciousness.

Cultural activist associations seek to open the public sphere to advance Creole and Kaf identities. This is evident in the creation of political parties stemming from popular cultural associations. The cultural associations <sup>36</sup> are portrayed as defenders of Réunionese interests but they do not call for independence. (This is possibly due to the fact that they are all civil servants and still want to keep their large bonuses). Many members of these cultural associations have lived abroad, generally in France. They travel for tertiary education or are sent there for training in national administration. I anticipate that cultural activist associations will initiate practices in the public and social spaces in order to construct first a Kaf identity and then a Creole identity. The Creole language is an important cultural element to acknowledge in the construction of Réunionese and Kaf identity.

The Creole language, as a symbol of resistance defended by activists, can be used to spread structures of symbolic representation into public spheres. This can be done for instance at school, but could be diffused to children in general, especially in the private sphere. Recovering private spheres for the children to formulate their views increases opportunities for participating in the public sphere. Cultural activists resist the dominance of the French and try to bring their 'hidden' culture into the public sphere. People now need to contribute as equals and to profit equally in such a debate. They not only need chances for advocating good causes in public, but also access to good information, the capacity to allocate and investigate this information, and to convey their understanding to others. A public space, where debate and

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<sup>36</sup> See list of associations in the introduction to Chapter 6.

reflection can increase, depends on private spheres where preparation for a contribution is promoted and encouraged. All of this must be structured by the active involvement of new participants. In Réunion, the Creole language, from being a means of communication between people of diverse origins, has now become a means of re-shaping the relationship between France and Réunion. So the Creole language is changing its function, from being an instrument of cultural intercommunication to an instrument of nationalism. Language continues to be a dynamic force in the existence of Réunion.

On the basis of my fieldwork, I maintain that the Réunionese Creole language and culture are based on the Kaf language and culture. In contrast with the previous desire for cultural assimilation the statement of difference and a wish for 'dissimilation' is now being articulated in several forms.<sup>37</sup> By implication this means that there is a need for the valorisation of the blackness of the culture in this island. I have observed this happening through the reconstruction of the notion of negritude. According to the Réunionese historian and militant activists Philippe Beyssière *a contrario* considers that the negritude movement did not concern the Kaf in Réunion.<sup>38</sup> The 'Black Atlantic' is different from the 'Black Indianoceanic'. In Réunion, Négritude might then be called 'kafritude', an emergent conception of race in Réunion where ethnicity is difficult to define.<sup>39</sup> Kafritude refers to, what Richard Burton explained by taking the case of Antillanité and Creolité for French West

<sup>37</sup> See also Burton, R. (1993).

<sup>38</sup> Beyssière, P. (2003). 'L'Invention du Caire', paper presented at the conference *Espaces, Sociétés et Transculturalité: Afrique - Océan Indien* organised on 26, 27 and 28 of May 2003 by the University of Réunion, UNESCO and Espace Afrique.

<sup>39</sup> Negritude was to Africa and Kafritude metaphor can be to Réunion.

Indians,<sup>40</sup> a description to reinforce a sense of local distinctiveness to the motherland France and in Réunion a black characteristic even among this 'local distinctiveness'.

Without the recognition of diversity and plurality, Réunionese society would continue to be in conflict culturally with the French Republic. Blackness among Kaf must first be acknowledged in the private sphere before entering the public sphere and diffusing to the rest of the population. This could decrease the racism and discrimination against Kaf. As has been seen in the questionnaire, the Réunionnais know exactly who they are and what constitutes political and identity memberships. National identity here is therefore, like all identities, a process and not a state. As I explained in Chapter 6, the history of 'Plaine des Cafres' demonstrated the emotional power of nationalism and the rapidity with which institutions are able to organise nationalism in times of crisis. Such power is embedded not only in sociological processes and as cultural discourses, but provides very real citizenship gains. This is also evidenced in strong feelings occurring from collective involuntary forms of resistance, 'to use nation states and national institutions to protect themselves against the recurrence of early psychotic anxiety'.<sup>41</sup>

Cultural expression in the public sphere is important for the Kaf group. Using a *Rouler* and a *Kayam*<sup>42</sup> has a symbolic dimension and is more than merely making

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<sup>40</sup> Burton, R. (1995). 'The Idea of Difference in Contemporary French West Indian thought: Négritude, Antillanité, Créolité' in Burton, R. and F. Reno, eds. *French and West Indian: Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guiana Today*. Warwick University Caribbean Studies. Basingstoke: Macmillan Caribbean.

<sup>41</sup> Vogler, 2002: 21

<sup>42</sup> Musical instruments to play Maloya.



music. In the *Servis Kaf* these instruments symbolise the contacts with the sacred and the participants bring their own ideas of spirituality. These symbols represent Africa and Madagascar and were hidden during slavery, colonialism and Départementalisation, therefore by extension people also denigrated the practicers who were mainly Kaf. By prohibiting Maloya we attack the Africans and Malgaches symbols and indirectly we denied the past and the history of the practicers as well as depriving the practicers of their culture. All these cultural elements symbolise Africa and Madagascar and need institutions to be legitimised in the public sphere such as a school of maloya, school of Moring or a temple for religious practicers.

An ethnic expression which expresses itself through nationalism is not likely to manifest itself since Réunion is not a nation-state and the metropolitan French reject authentic identities which compose their society in several provinces of France such as Basque, Bretons, Anjou and other provincial identities. In Réunion, the nation is nothing other than the mythologised group of subjects who have a certain perception of French nationality. The nation precedes the State. It can have been consolidated by a State but never fathered by it.<sup>43</sup> The formation of the nation in Réunion is the result of an incremental historical process of identity crystallization. It is carried by tradition or even norms, values, codes or feelings that the majority of the French are not able to recognise or experience. However those in the provinces, such as Bretons, Corsicans and Basques can relate to this because they have experienced a similar historical process. The French State does not recognise

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<sup>43</sup> Cahen, M. (1999). *La nationalisation du monde. Europe, Afrique, l'identité dans la démocratie*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

ethnicity, especially not identity consciousness, and even less the 'national consciousness' of the Réunionnais.

In Réunion, identity-based social movements have emerged and are beginning to play an important role in the current socio-cultural and political era. Réunionnais will increasingly claim this nationalism as they start to understand that social and cultural practices have always been suppressed, and that this has led to the oppression of nationalist opinions. This standpoint highlights previously hidden processes of oppression, for example the Zorey's role in domination through their denigration of specific Réunionese expressions. Given this background, the claiming of a Réunionese identity is a social necessity for Réunionnais. The Jacobin faith implies that the existing identity on the island should not be recognised. According to my survey, people in Réunion are increasingly conscious of their identity, and they do not hesitate to term themselves Creole or assert a Creole identity. They are therefore claiming a new political identity for themselves. The Réunionese nation must be objective and must be evident in the public sphere at the same level as in the private space, in opposition to the imported French nationalism that many Réunionnais currently manifest. This form of nationalism is false and mythologised.

Réunionese social identity construction and formation are part of a dialectic process determining the status of the island. The Réunionnais form their identity in the process of socialisation into symbolical spaces. Resistance to domination is resistance to the symbolic space of the Zorey and Gros Blanc. This kind of

resistance must be valued in the 'hidden' sphere of social relations and then in the public sphere. Whether a successful national cultural resistance or a continued subordination to the metropolitan centre will be the final fate of the Réunionnais remains uncertain.

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## **Institutions, State organisme and offices**

Agence Nationale du Travail (ANT)

Agence Nationale du Travail et de l'Emploi de La Réunion (ANPE)

Centre Régional Olympique et Sportif de La Réunion. (CROS)

Comité National d'Accueil et d'Actions pour les Réunionnais en Mobilité  
(CNARM)

Conseil de la Culture, de l'Education et de l'Environnement (CCEE)

Conseil Général de La Réunion

Conseil Régional de La Réunion

Institut National de la Statistique et d'Etudes Economiques (INSEE)

Institut Universitaire des Formations des Maîtres (IUFM)

Ministère des Finances et de l'Economie. Direction des Douanes de La Réunion.

Préfecture de La Réunion.

Rectorat de La Réunion

Sécurité Sociale de La Réunion.

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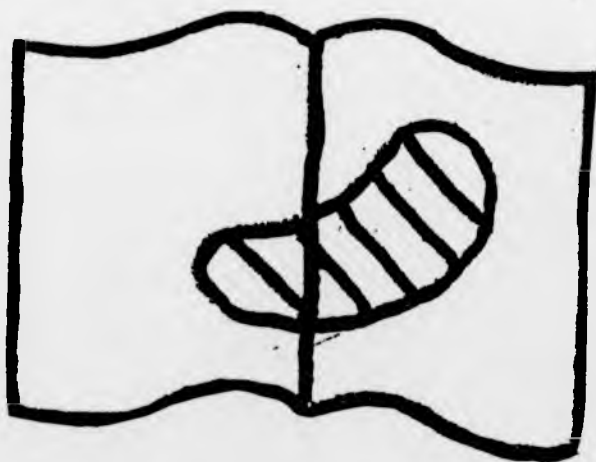
## APPENDIX

This questionnaire had 73 questions and only 43 of which are analyzed in this thesis. The following 1, 3 to 4, 11, 15 to 26, 30 to 36, 38 to 41, 44 to 49, 55, 59 to 60 were analyzed through the thesis.

The group questions from 2, 5 to 10, 12 to 14, 27 to 29, 37, 42 to 43, 50 to 54, 56 to 58 were not analyzed but will be used for others scholarly purposes.

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1/ Avez-vous entre :

15-20 ans	<input type="radio"/>	21-25 ans	<input type="radio"/>	26-30 ans	<input type="radio"/>
31-35 ans	<input type="radio"/>	36-40 ans	<input type="radio"/>	41-45 ans	<input type="radio"/>
46-50 ans	<input type="radio"/>	50-55 ans	<input type="radio"/>	Sans réponse	<input type="radio"/>

2/ Votre lieu de naissance ?

3/ Votre commune de résidence actuelle

4/ Sexe : Homme ☐ Femme ☐

5/ Votre situation familiale:

Célibataire	<input type="radio"/>	Marié/e	<input type="radio"/>	Vis maritalement	<input type="radio"/>
Divorcé/e	<input type="radio"/>	Veuf/Veuve	<input type="radio"/>	Sans réponse	<input type="radio"/>

6/ Avez-vous des enfants ? Oui ☐ Non ☐

7/ Quel est le diplôme le plus élevé que vous avez obtenu ?

Sans diplôme	<input type="radio"/>	Bac général	<input type="radio"/>
Certificat d'études	<input type="radio"/>	Deug-Bts niveau bac + 2	<input type="radio"/>
Brevet	<input type="radio"/>	Licence	<input type="radio"/>
CAP	<input type="radio"/>	Maîtrise	<input type="radio"/>
BEP	<input type="radio"/>	DEA-DESS	<input type="radio"/>
Bac technique	<input type="radio"/>	Doctorat	<input type="radio"/>
Non précisé	<input type="radio"/>	Sans réponse	<input type="radio"/>

8/ A quel âge avez-vous arrêté vos études ?

9/ Votre profession ?

Sans profession	<input type="radio"/>
Travailleur indépendant à votre compte	<input type="radio"/>
Cadres ou profession intellectuelles supérieures	<input type="radio"/>
Salarié de l'Etat ou service public	<input type="radio"/>
Salarié d'une collectivité territoriale locale	<input type="radio"/>
Salarié d'une entreprise/société privée	<input type="radio"/>
Ouvrier	<input type="radio"/>
Agriculteur-Pêcheur	<input type="radio"/>
Etudiant/e	<input type="radio"/>
Retraité/e	<input type="radio"/>
Sans réponse	<input type="radio"/>

10/ Quel est le titre de votre profession ?

11/ Voici une liste de tranches, pouvez-vous m'indiquer le revenu mensuel moyen de votre foyer, en comptant tous les revenus de votre foyer et les prestations sociales?

Moins de 5 000 F	<input type="radio"/>	De 20 001 à 30 000 F	<input type="radio"/>
De 5 001 à 10 000 F	<input type="radio"/>	De 30 001 à 40 000 F	<input type="radio"/>
De 10 001 à 15 000 F	<input type="radio"/>	Plus de 40 000 F	<input type="radio"/>
De 15 001 à 20 000 F	<input type="radio"/>	Sans réponse	<input type="radio"/>

12/ Qui est le chef du ménage ?

C'est vous	<input type="radio"/>	C'est votre conjoint	<input type="radio"/>
C'est votre mère	<input type="radio"/>	C'est votre père	<input type="radio"/>
Sans réponse	<input type="radio"/>	Autre	<input type="radio"/>

13/ Quelle est la profession de votre père ? (Si retraité ou chômeur ayant déjà travaillé, mentionner la dernière profession exercée) :

14/ Quelle est la profession de votre mère ? (Si retraitée ou chômeur ayant déjà travaillé, demander la dernière profession exercée) :

15/ Pour vous être Réunionnais signifie... (classez par ordre de préférence de 1 à 7)

Vivre à La Réunion	.....
Être né à La Réunion	.....
Avoir des parents nés à La Réunion	.....
Parler créole	.....
Français né ou vivant à La Réunion	.....
Avoir une tradition réunionnaise	.....
Avoir une identité culturelle réunionnaise	.....
Autres :	.....

16/ Pour vous être Français signifie... (classez par ordre de préférence de 1 à 8)

Vivre en France métropolitaine	.....
Être né en France métropolitaine	.....
Avoir des parents nés en France métropolitaine	.....
Parler français	.....
Français né ou vivant en France métropolitaine	.....
Avoir la nationalité française	.....
Avoir une tradition française	.....
Avoir une identité culturelle française	.....

Autres :

17/ Pour vous l'identité culturelle réunionnaise, c'est... (Classez de 1 à 10)

Ses traditions	.....	Ses valeurs	.....
Sa langue créole	.....	Son histoire	.....
Sa musique	.....	Ses croyances	.....
Son métissage	.....	Son éducation	.....
Sa littérature	.....	Sa cuisine	.....
Aucune	.....	Autres	.....

18/ Pour vous l'identité culturelle française, c'est... (Classez de 1 à 10)

Ses traditions	.....	Ses valeurs	.....
Sa langue française	.....	Son histoire	.....
Sa musique	.....	Ses croyances	.....
Son origine ethnique	.....	Son éducation	.....
Sa littérature	.....	Sa cuisine	.....
Aucune	.....	Autres	.....

19/ Pour vous, qu'est ce qui représente la France à La Réunion ? (Classez de 1 à 10)

Administration	.....	Ecole	.....	Fonctionnaire	.....
Gendarme/Police	.....	Média	.....	Militaire	.....
Préfecture	.....	Statut/Droit juridique	.....		.....
Langue française	.....	Zorey	.....		.....

Autres

20/ Combien de fois discutez-vous ou débattenz-vous de la question de l'identité culturelle réunionnaise... ?

1 fois par jour	<input type="radio"/>	1 à 2 fois par semaine	<input type="radio"/>
1 fois par mois	<input type="radio"/>	1 à 2 fois par an	<input type="radio"/>

21/ Avec qui discutez-vous de ce sujet? (classez par ordre de 1 à 6)

Maison/famille	.....	Travail/Collègue	.....	Club/Amis	.....
Café/Bar	.....	En France	.....	Touristes	.....
Autres	.....				



22/ Vous arrive-t-il parfois de discuter ou débattre de la politique réunionnaise ?

1 fois par jour ☐ 1 à 2 fois par semaine ☐  
1 fois par mois ☐ 1 à 2 fois par an ☐

23/ Pour vous, qui ou que représente le plus l'identité réunionnaise, sur le territoire métropolitain ou dans le monde (classez de 1 à 8)

Gastronomie..... Intellectuels..... Ecrivains.....  
Musiciens..... Sportif..... Plages.....  
Volcan..... Montagne..... Autres.....

24/ Quel sont les personnages publics qui représentent le plus la Réunion ? (Music, sport, légende, politique, économie, etc.)

1..... 2.....  
3..... 4.....  
5..... 6.....

25/ Vous arrive-t-il parfois d'écouter des émissions en Créole à la télévision ou à la radio ?

1 fois par jour ☐ 1 à 2 fois par semaine ☐  
1 fois par mois ☐ 1 à 2 fois par an ☐  
Ne connais pas d'émission en créole ☐

26/ Vous arrive-t-il de lire en Créole ?

1 fois par jour ☐ 1 à 2 fois par semaine ☐  
1 fois par mois ☐ 1 à 2 fois par an ☐  
Ne connais pas de littérature en créole ☐

27/ Considérez-vous qu'il y a suffisamment d'émissions en Créole à la télévision ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

28/ Considérez-vous qu'il y a suffisamment d'émissions en Créole à la radio ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

29/ Considérez-vous qu'il y a assez de littérature en créole ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

30/ Parlez-vous Créole ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

31/ Si oui...

Tout le temps ☐ Très souvent ☐  
Souvent ☐ Rarement ☐  
Jamais ☐ Sans réponse ☐

32/ Où parlez-vous le Créole ? (Classez par ordre de 1 à 5)

Au travail..... En famille.....  
Avec les amis..... A l'école.....  
Partout..... Sans réponse ☐

33/ Si vous ne parlez pas le Créole, (Si oui passez à la question suivante) aimeriez vous parler le Créole ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

34/ Comment parlez vous ou parlerez-vous avec vos enfants ?

Français uniquement ☐ Créole uniquement ☐  
Français et Créole ☐ Sans réponse ☐

35/ Aimeriez-vous que vos enfants parlent...

Français uniquement ☐ Créole uniquement ☐  
Français et Créole ☐ Français et une langue étrangère ☐  
Créole et 1 langue étrangère ☐ Français, créole et 1 langue étrangère ☐

36/ Etes vous pour la reconnaissance officielle de la langue créole dans l'espace public? (Media, travail, lieux public etc)

Oui ☐ Non ☐  
Ne sais pas ☐ Sans réponse ☐

37/ Aimeriez-vous parler (classez par de préférence de 1 à 5)

Allemand..... Anglais..... Cantonnais.....  
Espagnol..... Goujrati..... Hindi.....  
Mandarin..... Malgache..... Swahili.....  
Tamoule..... Autre :

38/ Avez-vous déjà collé un signe distinctif d'appartenance à La Réunion sur votre voiture ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

39/ Si Oui, lequel ?

40/ Avez-vous déjà collé un signe distinctif d'appartenance à la langue créole sur votre voiture ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

41/ Si Oui, lequel ?

42/ Avez-vous déjà porté des pendentifs ou des bijoux Créoles ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

43/ Si Oui, lequel ?

44/ Serez-vous favorable pour la création d'un emblème ou fanion Réunionnais tout en restant un Département français ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐  
Ne sais pas ☐ Sans réponse ☐

45/ Avez vous déjà assisté à des kabars maloya ?

Oui ☐ Oui, mais il y a très longtemps ☐ Non ☐

46/ Aimez-vous la musique Réunionnaise ?

Oui ☐ Guère ☐  
Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

47/ Pour vous quels sont les chanteurs ou groupes de musique qui représentent le plus la musique réunionnaise ?

1..... 2.....  
3..... 4.....  
5..... 6.....

48/ Aimeriez-vous avoir des prénoms créole

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

49/ Aimeriez-vous avoir des prénoms écrit en créole?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

50/ Connaissez-vous des contes et légendes Réunionnais ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

51/ Si oui, lesquels :

52/ Si non, pourquoi ?

Difficile à en trouver ☐ N'est pas intéressé ☐  
Sans réponse ☐ Autres :

53/ Supposez maintenant que le premier tour des élections communales ait lieu dimanche prochain, pour quel candidat y aurait-il le plus de chances que vous votiez?

Le candidat de l'extrême- gauche ☐  
 Le candidat autonomiste ☐  
 Le candidat du PC ☐  
 La candidat de PS ☐  
 Le candidat du mouvement écologiste ☐  
 Le candidat de l' UDF ☐  
 Le candidat du RPR ☐  
 Le candidat du FN ☐  
 Ne vote pas pour le parti, mais pour l'homme politicien ☐  
 Votera blanc ☐  
 Ne votera pas ☐  
 Ne sait pas ☐  
 N'est pas inscrit sur les listes électorales ☐  
 Sans réponse ☐

54/ Votiez-vous par tradition familiale ou sous influence d'un des membres de votre famille ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

55/ Pouvez-vous me dire quelle est votre religion si vous en avez une? (Vous pouvez également cocher plusieurs si vous avez 2 ou 3 religions)

Catholique ☐ Tamoule ☐ Musulmane ☐  
 Bouddhiste ☐ Aucune ☐ Autre: ☒

56/ Avez vous une ou des croyances/Superstition ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

57/ Si oui, lesquelles ? ☒

58/ Si un membre de votre famille ou un ami proche meurt, allez-vous à la veillée mortuaire ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Oui, mais moins qu'avant ☐

59/ Allez-vous au cimetière le jour de la Toussaint ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Oui, mais moins qu'avant ☐

60/ Comment vous définissez vous :

Cafre ☐ Malbar ☐ Chinois ☐  
 Zarab ☐ Yab ☐ Gros blanc ☐  
 Zorey ☐ Métis ☐ Mahorais ☐  
 Comoriens ☐ Malgache ☐ Autres ☐

61/ Votre père est-il d'origine:

Cafre ☐ Malbar ☐ Chinois ☐  
 Zarab ☐ Yab ☐ Gros blanc ☐  
 Zorey ☐ Métis ☐ Mahorais ☐  
 Comorien ☐ Malgache ☐ Autre: ☐

62/ Votre mère est-elle d'origine:

Cafrine ☐ Malbaraise ☐ Chinoise ☐  
 Zarab ☐ Yab ☐ Gros blanc ☐  
 Zorey ☐ Métisse ☐ Mahoraise ☐  
 Comoriens ☐ Malgache ☐ Autre: ☐

63/ Auxquels de ces lieux avez-vous le sentiment d'appartenir ? (Classez par ordre de préférence de 1 à 7)

L' Europe..... La France..... La Réunion.....  
 L' Afrique..... L'Inde..... L'Asie.....  
 Madagascar..... Autre: ☒

64/ Qu'est ce qui est plus important pour vous, c'est d'être avant tout...? (Classez par ordre de préférence de 1 à 3)

Européen..... Français..... Réunionnais.....

65/ Vous considérez que la Réunion appartient à.... (Classez par ordre de préférence 1 à 6) :

L'Océan Indien..... L'Afrique..... L'Inde.....  
 L'Asie..... L'Europe..... Autres.....

66/ Qui peut s'intégrer plus facilement dans la société Réunionnaise ? (Classez par ordre de préférence de 1 à 9)

Comorien..... Mahorais..... Africain.....  
 Malgache..... Mauricien..... Zorey.....  
 Indien..... Asiatique..... Européen.....

67/ Observez-vous des traditions et des modes de vie culturelles dans votre vie de tous les jours d'origine... (Classez de 1 à 7):

Africaine..... Chinoise..... Européenne.....  
 Française..... Indienne..... Malgache.....  
 Américaine..... Autres: ☒

68/ Quels sont les plats d'origines que vous consommez les plus souvent dans votre foyer (classez de 1 à 9)

Asiatique..... Africain..... Américain.....  
 Comorien..... Français..... Indien.....  
 Mahorais..... Malgache..... Réunionnais.....  
 Autres: ☒

69/ L'émigration vers la France Métropolitaine est-elle une solution pour résoudre le problème du chômage à La Réunion?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Ne sais pas ☐

70/ L'émigration vers un pays dans la zone Océan Indien est-elle une solution pour résoudre le problème du chômage à la Réunion ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Ne sais pas ☐

71/ Avez-vous déjà voyagé ? Oui ☐ Non ☐

72/ Si oui... (Plusieurs choix possibles)

Afrique ☐ Inde/Asie ☐ Amérique du Nord ☐  
 France ☐ Europe ☐ Amérique du Sud ☐  
 Maurice ☐ Madagascar ☐ Autres.....

72/ Avez vous vécu en France ou à l'étranger ?

Oui ☐ Non ☐ Sans réponse ☐

73/ Si oui, combien de temps ?

Moins de 1 an ☐ 1 à 2 ans ☐ 2 à 3 ans ☐  
 3 à 5 ans ☐ 5 à 10 ans ☐ Plus de 10 ans ☐

Je vous remercie de cotre collaboration.

Je suis également à la recherche de personnes pour des interviews. Si vous êtes intéressés pour discuter de ce sujet plus en profondeur, n'hésitez pas à me contacter en m'envoyant un courrier à l'adresse indiquée sur la première page ou au 06 92 22 36 80 ou par e-mail : loran\_medea@hotmail.com